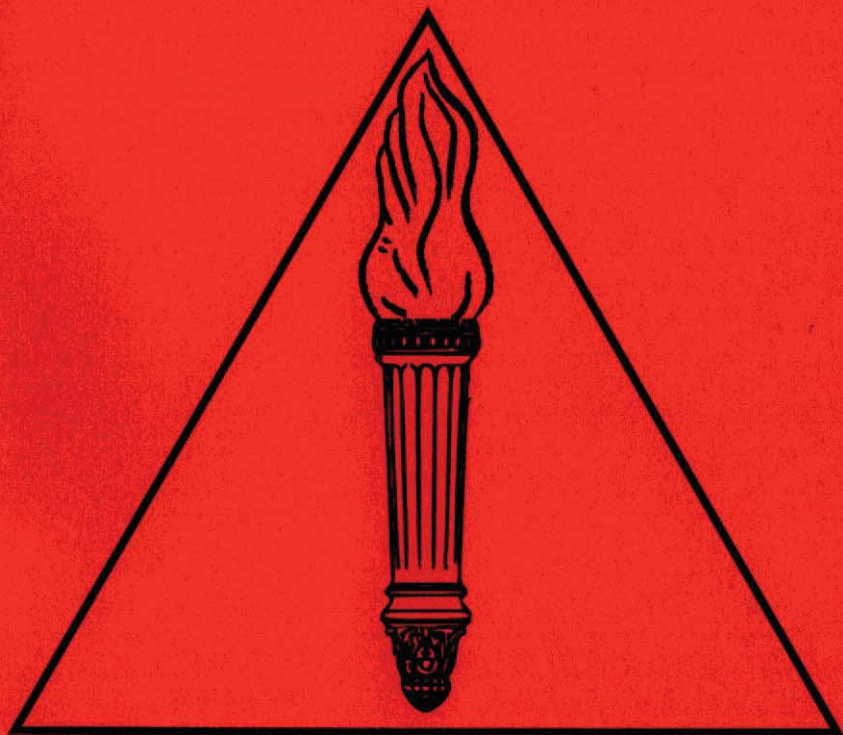


# Tools of Avernus



S. Aldarnay

*“He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep  
pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the  
heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes  
wisdom by the awful grace of God.”*

*—Aeschylus*

## HEALTH WARNING

MANY OF THE HERBS AND SUBSTANCES USED IN THE FOLLOWING WORKINGS ARE POISONOUS, AND THE GREATEST CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN PREPARING THEM. THE USE OF A NEW KNIFE AND CUTTING BOARD RESERVED PURELY FOR BANES IS ADVISED, IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY POSSESS ONE.

## INTRODUCTION

Some of the most enduring characters of Greek Mythology come to us from the dark realms below the earth, from the Halls of Hades. Names synonymous with witchcraft and the dark arts rise from its depths, seeking worship and recognition: Hekate, Keeper of The Keys; Kharon, The Ferryman of the Dead; The Furies, The Divine Avengers; Kerberos, the original Hound of Hell; and of course Lord Hades and Queen Persephone, distant rulers of the twilight realms.

Even the highest of Olympian powers must at some time descend to the Underworld, so different from their own, and seek audience of the gods who dwell in the dark. Hermes the divine messenger is the psychopomp, the guider of souls, who traverses the shadowy caverns, golden caduceus held high, showing the dead the way to rest. Frenzied Dionysos, too, must

enter the realms of Hades in search of the dead he has lost to restore them to the new splendour of Olympus.

Even the purest, most noble of souls must at some point enter the caverns of Avernus. Some are lost forever, doomed to wander with the misty shades amongst the asphodel, whilst others rise renewed, strengthened and full of knowledge granted by the gods themselves.

This short work is a collection of simple tools and charms attuned to the realm of Lord Hades. There are no complex rites and formula to memorise, for it is true enough to say that every man finds his own way to the world of the dead. These tools are guidelines and examples of objects that have been created with the chthonian world in mind, but are in no way definitive. Follow your instincts when working with the energy of these powers; the act of descent is a deeply personal one.

I make no claim that these are in any way ancient tools and tricks—they are all creations of my own devices taken from sources and theories found in Ancient Greek folklore as well as traditional British witchcraft. Many rely on the sympathetic links between various items and the gods and spirits of Dis.

## WORKING THESE RITES

Certain locales suit these workings better than others. The most obvious place to conduct ceremonies and rites with a focus on death and the Underworld would be the cemetery. The final resting place for the remains of the living are perfect places in which to conduct your work, and also perfect places to collect vital components for your tools. Bones, dirt and stone collected

from these places are all invaluable. The trevia, or three way crossroads, is another perfect place to work Hadean rites, for it is said that the torch-bearing Queen Hekate haunts these places, and offerings left here will be gratefully received by her and her host. Dirt from these places can be included in several workings and many objects will gain power by being interred here. The cave is a natural gateway into the lower worlds. In ancient Greece many gods and goddesses would dwell within caves, not least Cybele, the Phrygian goddess of immense power. With proper illumination and forward planning, a cave can act as the perfect space for creating and charging tools dedicated to the chthonic gods. The rivers which surround Orcus are some of its most famous features, and these divine streams have mortal counterparts. Many sites all over the Hellenic world were purported to be the places where streams, springs and rivers entered or left the underworld, and it is not beyond the realms of logic to assume that any river bank or spring is an appropriate location for your rites. The water collected from springs has long been associated with the dead due to its below-ground origins and is a useful tool.

Death is found at the edge of life, and as such all liminal places are within reach of the Underworld. Places set aside from every day reality are the perfect setting for these rites and workings, think outside the box and a door to Hades can open up almost anywhere.

## TIMING

Timing is everything... or so we are led to believe. Traditionally, the day it is considered best to perform works

involving the dead and their realm is Saturday, because this day is presided over by the planet Saturn. The waning and dark of the moon are also profitable for the workings of this kind, as is the astrological sign of Scorpio. The 13<sup>th</sup> August and 30<sup>th</sup> November are considered the days on which the Greeks held their festivals to Hekate whilst the Romans took the 29<sup>th</sup> of each month as being sacred to her. Modern practitioners may also wish to use days of recognition of the dead such as Remembrance Day in the United Kingdom (11<sup>th</sup> of November).

### CHTHONIC OFFERINGS

The gods of Hades were traditionally served via the pouring of libations into purposely dug pits. These libations would often include the following substances:

Blood from a sacrificial animals, such as a black sheep  
Strong red wine  
Honey  
Milk

Modern practitioners may wish to do this where circumstances allow, however, offerings of incense are also acceptable when libations cannot be made. A mixture of the following herbs and resins can be burnt on charcoal to appease the gods below:

Myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*)  
Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)  
Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*)  
Storax (*styrax benzoin*)  
Poppy seeds (*papaver species*)

Sesame seeds (*Sesamum indicum*)  
Balm of Gilead (*Populus candicans*)  
Cypress oil

## THE ORCUS CASKET

For those of us who do not have ready access to the realms of Lord Hades, there are various ways we can imbue an item with the essence of his realm. One of the most effective ways of doing this is via the creation of an Orcus Casket. The materials used in its creation are all sacred to, or in sympathy with the worlds of the dead, and as such it is a perfect tool for the charging of chthonic tools and charms.

Take a wooden box and fill it with some or all of the following: graveyard dirt, powdered bone, yew wood shavings, wormwood herb, baneful or poisonous herbs and plants. Ideally, craft the box from yew or cypress wood as these are sacred to Lady Hekate and Queen Persephone. Do not fill the casket all the way, as you will need to leave room for items to be placed inside it.

## VESSEL OF AVERNUS

An alternative to this is the creation of the Vessel of Avernus. This urn-like construct acts in the same way as the Orcus Casket but is shaped as a vase or Greek urn. They are to be formed from red clay and given a black glaze. If desired, include finely powdered bone in the clay or glaze and whilst shaping, instead of using normal water, use an infusion of wormwood and yew slips in spring water. It is preferable that you make a

lid for your Vessel so that the energies within can be contained during the charging process. Again, fill it with a combination of graveyard dirt, powdered bone, herbs and banes.

## WATERS OF LETHE: RIVER OF FORGETTING

Lethe is the River of Oblivion that winds its way thorough the fields of Hades; the shades of the deceased must drink from this stream in order to forget their mortal lives. Linked heavily to sleep, Lethe's waters flow around the caves of Hypnos, for sleep is a form of forgetting which soothes all human cares. For those who are unable to venture to Hades for themselves, the following procedure can be used to make a useful substitute to Lethe's waters.

To create the waters of this meandering stream, grind and beat:

Rosemary (*rosmarinus officinalis*),  
Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*),  
Marjoram (*Majorana hortensis*)  
Black hellebore (*Helleborus niger*)

Bruise and mutilate the plant, but do not grind it too finely. Hellebore is a powerful daemon, use its body sparingly, it is highly toxic and will cause death if ingested—TAKE GREAT CARE IN PREPARING THESE WATERS. Hellebore has the great power of reversal, any plant it comes into contact with will have its properties reversed.

Once prepared, place these herbs in a dark glass jar or bottle. Fill the bottle until the herbs are well covered with good, strong alcohol of 45% proof or greater, and then top the rest

of the bottle up with water from a sacred spring or well. Inter this bottle in a graveyard or cemetery for the space of the dark moon.

After the three days have passed, remove the bottle and place it within an Orcus Casket or Vessel of Avernus. Every night for three weeks, remove the bottle and shake well, repeating the following hymn to Morpheus:

TO SLEEP

*The fumigation from a Poppy.*

“Sleep, king of Gods, and men of mortal birth, Thy pleasing, gentle chains preserve the soul, And e’en the dreadful cares of death controul; For death and Lethe with oblivious stream, Sov’rign of all sustain’d by mother Earth; For thy dominion is supreme alone, O’er all extended, and by all things known. ‘Tis thine all bodies with benignant mind In other bands than those of brass to bind: Tamer of cares, to weary toil repose, From whom sweet solace in affliction flows. Mankind thy genuine brothers justly deem. With fav’ring aspect to my pray’r incline, And save thy mystics in their works divine.

*The Hymns of Orpheus*

Translated by Thomas Taylor

Replace the bottle in the Orcus Casket or Avernus Vessel when you feel it has been sufficiently shaken.

When three weeks have passed, exhume the bottle one last time and decant the liquid into another, smaller vessel, straining as you do so. This bottle now contains The Waters of Lethe to be employed as you see fit.



## WATERS OF KOKYTOS: RIVER OF WAILING

The river Kokytos flows around the Underworld and it is the river of sorrow and pain; it is a sluggish river which bars rest to the spirits of those unburied. To create a substitute for its waters mix the following with good strong alcohol and spring water. Each plant is the sign of the lamentation of a god for their doomed lovers:

Prickly Letuce (Adonis)  
Larkspur petals (Hyakinthos)  
Calamus (Kalamos)  
Poppy petals (Adonis)  
Crocus petals (Krokos)

Mix with ground sea salt and finely powdered mud from a cemetery or marsh and shake well. Follow the same procedure for the waters of Lethe, with the exception of the prayers to Sleep.

## KEY OF HORN

The Oneiroi who come to sleeping men through the great gates of horn gift men with prophetic dreams of revelation, whereas those who wing their way to the mortal world through the shining gates of ivory give only false, illusory dreams. These gates lie in the Underworld, at the edge of the realm of Hypnos, whence from its trees and caves the spirits of dreams, the Oncrioi, fly forth as a swarm of bats into the world. To create a talismanic key to unlock the Gate of Horn following these instructions:

Take an antique key, better it be if you found it and you don't know what it unlocks. Dip the key into a tea made from the following substances:

Poppy seed (*Papaver somniferum* is best, but any of the *Papaver* genus)

Mugwort (*artemisia vulgaris*)

Jasmine (*Jasminum*)

White Rose

Wild lettuce (*Lactuca virosa*)

Thorn Apple (*Datura stramonium*)

Dip the key into a small amount of powdered bullhorn, making sure as much of it is coated as you can. Hang this above your bed from a black ribbon whilst repeating the Orphic hymn to the god of sleep.

## KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

Hekate Kleidouchos holds the keys to the underworld. She sits at the crossroads of Hades, flaming torches brandished high, guiding the souls of the dead to their places of rest or torment. The following is yet another key charm which can be used to gain easier access to the realm of Hades. Take an old key and coat it with the viscous juice of the aconite plant (*Aconitum napellus*) mixed with human blood. **THIS IS A BANEFUL SUBSTANCE SO TAKE CARE.** Sprinkle it with powdered bone, and the ashes of:

Willow (*Salix species esp Salix babylonica*)

Cypress (*Cupressus species esp cuperessus sempervirens*)

Poplar (*populus species esp Populus Alba*)

Store within the Orcus Casket or Avernus Vessel for one week, and bury at a trevia for the space of a dark moon. Whilst interring the key in the ground speak the following prayer to Hekate, in either Greek or English:

*Einodian Hekatên, kléizô, Trihoditin Erannên,  
Ouranian, Chthonian, te kai Einalian, Krokopeplos.  
Tymbidian, Psychais Nekyôn meta bakcheusan,  
Perseian, Philerêmon, agallomenên elaphoisi.  
Nykterian, Skylakitin, amaimaketon Basileian.  
Thérobromon, Azôston, aprosmachon Eidos echousan.  
Tauropolon, Pantos Kosmou Kléidouchon, Anassan,  
Hégemonên, Nymphên, Kourotrophon, Ouresiphoin.  
Lissomenos, Kourên, teletais hosiaisi pareinai,  
Boukolôi eumeneousan aei kecharêoti thymôi.*

*Hekatê of the Path, I invoke Thee, Lovely Lady of the Triple Crossroads,  
Celestial, Chthonian, and Marine One, Lady of the Saffron Robe.  
Sepulchral One, celebrating the Bakchic Mysteries among the Souls of the Dead,  
Daughter of Persês, Lover of Solitude, rejoicing in deer.  
Nocturnal One, Lady of the Dogs, invincible Queen.  
She of the Cry of the Beast, Ungirt One, having an irresistible Form.  
Bullherder, Keeper of the Keys of All the Universe, Mistress,  
Guide, Bride, Nurturer of Youths, Mountain Wanderer.  
I pray Thee, Maiden, to be present at our hallowed rites of initiation,  
Always bestowing Thy graciousness upon the Boukolos.*

After the three nights of the dark of the moon have passed dig it up at night and immediately wrap it in a piece of black silk until it is needed.

To use this key, wear it as a charm or pendant around your neck, upon a cord steeped in a liquid comprised of spring water, red henna powder and wormwood. During your journeys to the realms of Hades this key will improve the ease of passage.

### TARTAREAN TORCH: FOR RETRIBUTION

*“They have burst the bars of abysmal Erebus, the throng of sisters with Tartarean torch”*

—Seneca, *Oedipus*

Take a yew branch and wrap the end in cotton. Dip the end in a mixture of lighter fluid, cypress oil and copper sulphate and allow to air dry. Light the torch at a liminal place, after sunset on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Hold the torch high above you and entreat the kindly ones thus:

*Alecto! Megara! Tisiphone! Gracious daughters of Nyx I entreat thee! I have been wronged by (name) and seek your retribution! Visit upon him/her your righteous torments, go forth from Erebus, oh ye hounds of wrath, and wreak just revenge on the soul of (name) let them not rest until they have atoned for this wrong!*

Pour libations of blood, red wine, honey, milk and whatever else you feel appropriate into a hole in the ground.

The Kindly Ones will only work revenge on your behalf when you have been justly wronged in their eyes, or have transgressed the divine laws, including murder of family members, the betrayal of your family and the breaking of oaths.

### POMMEGRANATE CHARM: TO INFLICT MELANCHOLIA

To inflict an individual with melancholia and dark moods make a hollow image from clay or wax and inscribe it with their name. When dry, take the image and lay it on an altar decorated with grey and black cloths, asphodel flowers and aconite blooms. Burn incense made from myrrh and oppopanax. On the altar have your Orcus Casket and a bowl of dried pomegranate seeds, without any flesh remaining. Take the image and name it as your intended in front of the gods of the Underworld, paying particular attention to the following daemons: Ara (Curse), Penthos (Grief), and Mania (Madness). If you wish, performing a baptism of sorts using milk and honey is a good way to do this.

Once you have forged the link between person and image, then take six of the seeds from the bowl and place them within the hollow of the image, saying the following words:

*“You have eaten from the orchard of Askalaphos, as did dread queen Persephone when but a maid. May you wander as a Shade amongst the living. These seeds fill your belly and you are as the dead.”*

Block up the hollow of the doll so it contains the seeds and inter this in the Casket or Vessel, sealing it shut for as long as you wish to inflict your torments upon your intended.

## KERBEROS CHARM: TO PROTECT THE DOORWAY TO THE SANCTUM

*“Hither all shall come, hither the highest and the lowest class: evil it is, but it is a path that all must tread; all must assuage the three heads of the barking guard-dog...”*

–Propertius, *Elegies*

Take three sharp teeth from three different hounds, dead or shed whilst living, though preferably from those dead, and better it be if they are joined through family ties. Soak these teeth in a tincture of aconitum and perfume them with myrrh and aloes wood. Place these teeth in a black silk bag, or an earthenware vessel, and store above or beneath the doorway to be protected.

### FOR THOSE WHO TRAVEL BY NIGHT

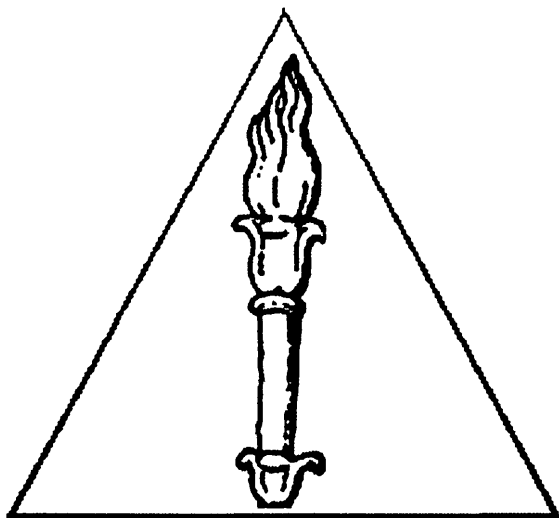
Take air drying clay and mix it with finely powdered myrrh and the root of the angelica plant. Shape this mixture into a triangle and pierce the uppermost point with a skewer, allow this to dry under the light of the full moon. Paint the following on the reverse of the amulet:

Εκατη  
Εινοδια  
Νυκτιπολος

(or)

Hekate  
Einodia  
Nyktipolos

On the front face of the talisman paint a burning torch. Allow this paint to dry and coat in varnish to protect. When all this is dry thread a cord through the hole in the top point.



Bury, or hang this amulet at a crossroads whilst reciting an entreaty to Queen Hekate and the night walking spirits, that they protect you as you travel by night. Leave the crossroads along a different way from the one you arrived at. Wear this amulet around the neck or ankle to keep you safe whilst you travel at night—this is of particular benefit to those who work at night and must traverse dangerous city streets such as bar workers and streetwalkers.

## AIDOS KUNE

*Upon the head of the hero lay the dread cap of Haidēs which had the awful gloom of night”*

–Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles*

Aidos Kune (Helm of Hades) was a turn of proverb used in ancient Greece to show an individual has made themselves invisible by some means. The helm of darkness was given to Hades when Zeus received his thunderbolts and Poseidon his trident, and with these tools they defeated the raging Titan armies. To create a substitute for this, create an incense from the following ingredients:

Fern seeds

Myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*)

Aconite (*Aconitum napellus*)

Amaranth flowers (*amaranthus species*)

Asphodel (*Asphodelus ramosus*)

Dip this into the Waters of Lethe and allow this to dry somewhere warm. This can be carried on the person when you wish to avoid detection and walk unseen.

## TO AID IN YOUR WORKING

Hermes is a far-wandering god, and in his role as psychopomp he spends a lot of time in the underworld. As one of the principle gods of magic, Hermes can be invoked before a rite to assist in your endeavour. The following is one of the



Orphic hymns, to Terrestrial Hermes. Burn Storax resin as an incense for the god, and repeat the following:

*Hermes I call, whom Fate decrees to dwell  
In the dire path which leads to deepest hell  
O Bacchic Hermes, progeny divine  
Of Dionysius, parent of the vine,*

*And of celestial Venus Paphian queen,  
Dark eye-lash'd Goddess of a lovely mien:  
Who constant wand'rest thro' the sacred feats  
Where hell's dread empress, Proserpine, retreats;  
To wretched souls the leader of the way  
When Fate decrees, to regions void of day:  
Thine is the wand which causes sleep to fly,  
Or lulls to slumb'rous rest the weary eye;  
For Proserpine thro' Tart'rus dark and wide  
Gave thee forever flowing souls to guide.  
Come, blessed pow'r the sacrifice attend,  
And grant our mystic works a happy end.*

*To The Terrestrial Hermes, the Initiations of Orpheus trans.*

Thomas Taylor

## CONCLUSION

On study of the spells, charms and tools contained herein, one can see that the magic of Avernus is of great assistance to the common man. Rather than dealing with the lofty pursuits of the priestly and aloof, the gods of the Underworld are able to offer ready aid in daily matters, for those who deign to offer sacrifice in their darkened halls. The Underworld is deep within the earth, and those who wish to work with its shadowy denizens must be willing to look deep within themselves and assess how far they are willing to go to meet their ends—not a task for the faint of heart.

Treat these entities and energies with respect, approach with humility and make a good impression—you are sure to be seeing them again one day.



**HADEAN PRESS  
GUIDES TO THE UNDERWORLD**

**TOOLS OF AVERNUS**

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