I use many transliterated Greek words in this book, translating the term when it first is used but not thereafter. For convenience, here are definitions of the most important terms. Plurals follow in parentheses.

agalma (agalmata) anything that delights a god, including a statue of the god or a tree or animal sacred to the god

aition (aitia) a myth explaining the origin of something

alastor (alastores) and elasteros (elasteroi) a vengeful ghost or an agent who works on the ghost’s behalf

aöros, aöre (aöroi, aörai) a man or woman who dies too young

ataphos (ataphoi) a dead person whose body has not received funeral rites

biaiothanatos (biaiothanatoi) a person who died violently

choë (choai) a libation poured out to the dead

eidōlon (eidōla) a ghost (literally “image”)

epōidē/epaoidē (epōidai/epaoidai) a chanted or sung spell

erinyes (erinyes) a deity who works to avenge the dead, among other things
gellō (gelloudeś) a female ghost who attacks women and children
(no plural of this word exists in ancient Greek; I had to adopt the
plural form used in some Byzantine Greek sources)
genos (genē) kin (often with political implications)
goēs (goētes) and goēteia an expert in dealing with disembodied souls
and the art that he practices; hence, also “goetic”
goōs (gooi) a highly emotional funeral lament
katharos (katharoi) and katharsis an adjective meaning “pure” and
noun meaning “purification”
katabasis (katabaseis) a journey to the Underworld
katadesmos (katadesmoi) a curse tablet
kēr (kēres) a supernatural agent who brings death or other misfortune
kleos glory, renown
kourotrophos (kourotrophoi) one who nurtures children
lamia (lamiai) a female ghost who attacks women and children
lex sacra (leges sacrae) LATIN: law concerning religious practices
lithica a work describing magical stones and their properties
maschalismos the ritualized act of severing a corpse’s extremities
miaros (miaroi) and miasma (miasmata) an adjective meaning pol-
lututed and noun meaning pollution
mormō (mormones) a female ghost who attacks women and children
mormolukeion/mormolukē (mormolukeia/mormolukai) a female
ghost who attacks women and children
nekuia (nekuiai) an encounter between living and dead individuals,
usually initiated through ritual
nekuomanteion (nekuomanteia) an oracle in which the dead
prophecy
oikos (oikoi) a household or family
palamnaios (palamnaioi) either a murderer or a spirit who avenges
murder
parthenos (parthenoi) a woman who has never been married
pharmakon (pharmaka) and pharmakeutrides magical material, espe-
cially drugs, and the female specialists who gather and use them
**Frequently Used Terms**

*phasma (phasmata)* and *phantasma (phantasmata)* ghosts

*progonoi* progenitors

*prostropaios (prostropaioi)* either a person (or god) who should be averted or a person (or god) or functions as an averter

*psychagōgos (psychagōgoi)* and *psychagōgia* one who invokes souls and the art by which he does so

*psychē (psychai)* soul

*psychopompos (psychopompoi)* a leader of souls

*strix (striges)* a female ghost who attacks women and children

*teletē (teletai)* rites, especially those associated with mysteries

*theos (theoi)* a god, either male or female; but cf. *thea (theai)*, goddess

*theoxenia* a meal to which a god is invited

*threnos (threnoi)* a formal funeral lament, often professionally composed

*xenos (xenoi)* and *xenia* a guest with whom one has a formal friendship and the friendship itself
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