

self-conscious discussion of the author's understanding of ancient magic appeared at the beginning of the book and was referred to where relevant throughout the commentaries. Clearly, necromancy and the dead are primary for O.'s understanding of magic overall, and I would have appreciated a discussion of why this is so. Many sources for ancient magic do involve the spirits (or body parts) of those who had recently or violently died or who died before their time, but the majority of examples within the Greek magical papyri involve other means, such as Egyptian gods or angels with pseudo-Hebraic names. If O. is operating on the assumption that most powers involved in ancient magic ultimately derive from a cult of the dead, this again would have been an important concept to present and explain in the introduction to the volume.

O. specifically has designed the book for 'undergraduates and interested amateurs' (p. 3), and these readers will find the book engaging and relatively easy to navigate. The book is a welcome complement to existing materials and will be an engaging member of the scholarly conversation on the nature of ancient religion and magic.

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MORE MAGIC

P. MIRECKI, M. MEYER (edd.): *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*. (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 141.) Pp. xvii + 468, ills. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Cased, €161/US\$187. ISBN: 90-04-11676-1.

The current boom in studies of ancient magic receives another substantial contribution with this collection of essays. The volume may be described as a sequel to the one edited by Mirecki and Meyer in 1995 under the title *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, and derives from another conference on the topic, held in 1998 at Chapham University in Orange, California. As in the earlier book, the scope is very wide. Though the centre of gravity is clearly the Greco-Roman world, the collection also includes essays on rituals and magic in the ancient Near East (Hittites, Mesopotamia, ancient Israel), in Judaism, and in Coptic and Islamic Egypt. There is also a section of more theoretically oriented essays. The diversity of topics makes the volume somewhat incoherent, especially because several of the contributions omit to address such wider implications of their case studies as would increase their interest outside the circles of specialists.

Space restrictions do not allow discussion of all the twenty-four essays in the book, and this review will concentrate on those which offer the greatest interest for classical scholars.

The volume includes a couple of previously unpublished magical texts. 'A New Magical Formulary', begun by the late William Brashear and completed by Roy Kotansky, presents, with a detailed commentary, a papyrus sheet from a fourth-century magical handbook (P. Berol. 17202) with spells and invocations against demons, to silence legal opponents, to capture a thief, to achieve an erection, etc. A very interesting feature of this document is that it shows how what were apparently Christian liturgical texts could be reused for magical purposes, thus illustrating the interdependence of magical and religious 'ritual power'.

In 'Two Papyri with Formulae for Divination', David Jordan successfully improves

the reading and interpretation of *PGM* XXIVa and *PGM* LXXVII. The presentation of the latter text is, however, marred by several typographical errors in the Greek. A more extensive commentary on that text would also have been desirable.

'An Early Christian Gold *Lamella* for Headache' by Roy Kotansky is the second *editio princeps* in the volume. This second-century *lamella* appears to cast Jesus in the rôle of Perseus, destroying the Gorgon of headache (though I was not entirely convinced by this interpretation), and also, as if to complete the syncretism, employs Jewish invocation formulae.

Five papers deal with the more theoretical issues of defining and conceptualizing magic. Among these, Jonathan Z. Smith's 'Great Scott! Thought and Action One More Time' is entertaining in parts but rather disappointing and muddled in its conclusions. Fritz Graf usefully surveys 'Theories of Magic in Antiquity', outlining at three or four theories: magical words constitute a shared language of humans and gods or demons (Apuleius, Augustine), magic is rituals performed for private and egoistical aims (Apuleius, Augustine, Roman law), magic is deception but psychologically effective (Plato), magic works through forces of cosmic sympathy (Plotinus).

In a lengthy essay entitled 'The Poetics of the Magical Charm', H. S. Versnel instructively deals with the formal characteristics of magical formulae, highlighting the creativity and playfulness of the mechanisms of repetition, variation, and paradox, whereby other 'worlds' are being rhetorically imagined. This is a welcome and incisive supplement to the more traditional theories of magic based on action type, intentionality, or social marginality.

David Frankfurter ('Dynamics of Ritual Expertise in Antiquity and Beyond') wishes to move away from the category of 'magic' and prefers instead to speak about 'ritual expertise', citing a mass of comparative ethnographical and historical material for the purpose of constructing new taxonomies. This shift in terminology and focus tends, however, to blur necessary distinctions. Thus, the definition of the 'ritual expert' given on p. 160, and which relates to the local healer, the 'wise woman', etc., seems to be forgotten when the essay turns to the official representatives of the 'Great Tradition' on p. 167. The outline of various types of official and unofficial, 'Great' and 'Small' Tradition, central and marginal, local and peripheral ritual agents is valuable, but these types are not, one feels, sufficiently analysed in their systematic, mutual relationships, but tend to be simply juxtaposed in the presentation.

C. A. Hoffman's article, 'Fiat Magia', pleads on the contrary for the retention of the 'magic' word, arguing primarily from the unavoidable conventionality of all terms, including those of scholarship. He is right: the currently fashionable rejection of well-established scholarly terms seems to be based, by way of pure antithesis, on the same essentialistic notions about definitional finality as the theories that are ostensibly rejected.

Among the contributions dealing with the Ancient Near East, the one by Billie Jean Collins, 'Necromancy, Fertility and the Dark Earth: The Use of Ritual Pits in Hittite Cult', offers special interest for students of Greek religion with its discussion of chthonic cult practices and pig sacrifice among the Hittites. The parallels with the cult of Demeter are intriguing.

The three articles on Judaism (by Daniel Breslauer, James Davila, and Michael Swartz) are all interesting, and tend to demonstrate that Judaism lends support to the Maussian theory that 'magic' is typically constructed as private, unofficial, unsanctioned and secret, in contrast to religion as a public, collective and official activity.

Five articles deal specifically with the Greco-Roman world. Christopher A.

Faraone, 'The Ethnic Origins of a Roman-Era *Philtrokatadesmos* (*PGM* IV 296–434)', discusses several variants of a binding recipe that was used in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods to effect erotic subjugation. He convincingly shows how the recipe developed from the Greek *katadesmos* into its later 'syncretistic' forms rather than from Egyptian antecedents as has been previously suggested.

Sarah Iles Johnston, 'Sacrifice in the Greek Magical Papyri', argues that magic practitioners, rather than subversively reversing normal ritual patterns, experimented with extending them. (In this, her perspective bears some resemblance to that of Versnel in his article.) She also points to the initiatory structure of certain magical-ritual acts. One feels, however, that she may perhaps be overstating the 'orthodoxy' of magical sacrifice, and that there is more ambiguity at work here than she is willing to allow.

Lynn R. LiDonnici, 'Beans, Fleawort, and the Blood of a Hamadryas Baboon', discusses the various types of substances prescribed in the recipes of the *PGM*. This is a useful survey, with several interesting observations, though the article seems to lack a main thesis.

Oliver Phillips, 'The Witches' Thessaly', briefly surveys the references to Thessaly as the home of witches, and concludes by attributing the cause of this dubious reputation to the legend of Medea.

Peter T. Struck, 'Speech Acts and the Stakes of Hellenism in Late Antiquity', is a stimulating and many-layered study in the construction of cultural identity, using the examples of Porphyry and Iamblichus to describe alternative strategies for self-definition in a multi-cultural society.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the volume also contains an article, by Ayse Tuzlak, on the heresiological construction of Simon Magus as a 'magician', and two articles dealing with the survival of ancient magical forms in pre-modern and modern Egypt: Marvin Meyer, on the 'Prayer of Mary', and Nicole B. Hansen, on execration magic.

More care should have been given to the editing of this volume. It contains rather too many typographical errors. In one of the articles, the conclusion repeats *verbatim* ten lines that already appeared ten pages previously (cf. pp. 213 and 223). On the other hand, the inclusion of an index of primary sources is most welcome. Although the volume as a whole cannot be said to constitute a decisive advance in our understanding of magic as a phenomenon, or of the theory of ritual, many of its essays are significant contributions to the study of the particular documents or themes they discuss.

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ANCIENT ACTING

P. EASTERLING, E. HALL (edd.): *Greek and Roman Actors. Aspects of an Ancient Profession*. Pp. xxxi + 510, maps, ill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Cased, £65/US\$90. ISBN: 0-521-65140-9.

As Easterling and Hall make clear in their preface to this collection, it seeks neither to be a comprehensive reference work on ancient actors nor a continuous narrative, but rather a 'series of complementary essays' on ancient actors and acting. The twenty essays cast their net widely, from Thespis to Byzantium, and from great public

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