

JAN N. BREMMER

THE BIRTH OF THE TERM 'MAGIC'

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## THE BIRTH OF THE TERM ‘MAGIC’

In 1920 Samson Eitrem made a trip to Egypt, where, out of his own pocket, he bought several papyri, among which were four magical ones.<sup>1</sup> After a thorough study of the available magical papyri in the major European libraries, he brought out a first edition of the Oslo magical papyri in 1925. This was the beginning of a long interest which lasted virtually until his death in 1966, when he left behind an unfinished manuscript of over seven hundred pages on Greek and Roman magic and divination.<sup>2</sup> In some ways, Eitrem was ahead of his time, since it is hard to think of any other subject which, in recent years, has attracted so much scholarly interest as magic. During the Second World War the proofs of the third volume of Karl Preisendanz's *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, together with the index, had perished under the bombs of the Allies.<sup>3</sup> This unfortunate accident surely was a major handicap for the study of ancient magic, which since languished until it once again became a subject of interest from the late 1960s onwards, the epicenter of this development being Cologne.<sup>4</sup> In the last decade, especially, we have seen many new translations,<sup>5</sup> new or revised editions,<sup>6</sup> and inspiring collections of studies of the magical texts, be it Greek, Roman, Jewish or Coptic.<sup>7</sup> We also have a new study of the discovery of the great ‘Theban magical library’,<sup>8</sup> two bibliographical surveys and the first major and admirable synthesis.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution is the revised, first part of my Eitrem Lecture, ‘From *mageia* in Classical Greece to magic in the Apocryphal Acts’, which I delivered at the University of Oslo on 18 September, 1998; the Appendix has also profited from a discussion by our Groningen research group ‘Religious Symbols’ on 28 September, 1998. The second, ‘Christian’ part will appear in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew* (Leuven, 1999). I have kept the oral style, but added notes. I am very grateful to my hosts, in particular Jens Braarvig and Sigurd Hjelde, for a most pleasant reception.

<sup>2</sup> For Eitrem (1872–1966) see E. Smith, Eitrem, Samson, in E. Bull and E. Jansen (eds.), *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon III* (Oslo, 1926) 497–500; the obituaries by A.-J. Festugière, *CRAI* 1966, 413–7; B. A. van Groningen, *Jaarboek Kon. Nederlandse Ak. Wet.* 1966–67, 406–8; L. Amundsen, *Gnomon* 39 (1967) 429–32 and *Årbok det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo 1967* (Oslo, 1968) 69–76; finally, the charming recollections by K. Kleve, Samson Eitrem – on the threshold of antiquity, in D. R. Jordan *et al.* (eds.), *Proceedings of the First Samson Eitrem Seminar* (Bergen, 1999); for his bibliography, L. Amundsen, *Symbolae Osloenses* 43 (1968) 110–23.

<sup>3</sup> K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2 vls (Leipzig and Berlin, 1928–31), re-edited by Albert Henrichs (Stuttgart, 1973–74).

<sup>4</sup> *Honoris causa* I mention A. Henrichs, L. Koenen, R. Merkelbach and D. Wortmann.

<sup>5</sup> H. D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago, 1992<sup>2</sup>); J. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York, 1992); M. Meyer and R. Smith (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> For example, R. Merkelbach and M. Toti, *Abrasax*, 4 vls (Opladen, 1990–96: the last two volumes are by Merkelbach alone); R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini (eds.), *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vls (Opladen, 1990–92); P. Schäfer and S. Shaked (eds.), *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza I* (Tübingen, 1994); R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets I* (Opladen, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, C. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera: ancient Greek magic and religion* (New York, 1991); *Helios* 21.2 (1994), a special issue edited by S. I. Johnston; M. Meyer and P. Mirecki (eds.), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden, 1995); H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic* (Washington DC, 1995); P. Schäfer and H. Kippenberg (eds.), *Envisioning Magic* (Leiden, 1997). Note also the review of many of the new works by W. Brashear, *CPh* 91 (1996) 372–83.

<sup>8</sup> W. Brashear, *Magical papyri: Magic in Bookform*, in P. Ganz (ed.), *Das Buch als magisches und als Repräsentationsobjekt* (Wiesbaden, 1992) 25–57.

<sup>9</sup> Surveys: D. Jordan, A survey of Greek defixiones not included in the special corpora, *GRBS* 16 (1985) 151–97; W. M. Brashear, *The Greek Magical Papyri: an Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)*, *ANRW II.18.5* (Berlin and New York, 1995) 3380–3684. Synthesis: F. Graf, *Gottesnähe und Schadenzauber. Die Magie in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Munich, 1996) = *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge MA, 1997), both improved editions of the original French version (1994). Note also the informative, albeit theoretically less sophisticated, A. Bernand, *Sorciers grecs* (Paris, 1991).

Now it is well known that our concept of magic has its roots in ancient Greece. This origin was investigated in a famous article by Arthur Darby Nock in 1933.<sup>10</sup> Nock (1902–63) was a marvellous scholar and probably the best expert on ancient religion as a whole in the period of 1930–1960.<sup>11</sup> As so often with brilliant scholars, he showed his genius already at an early age. When he was only 27, the great Russian ancient historian Michael Rostovtzev (1870–1952) already send him a copy of his *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (1926) with the inscription: ‘in remembrance of (the international conference in) Oslo and all I learned from him there’.<sup>12</sup> Nock’s impressive erudition and low level of theorizing makes that his work has lasted even better than that of his friend Martin P. Nilsson (1874–1967), although the latter was certainly his match in the area of Greek religion.<sup>13</sup> His reputation is probably the cause of the fact that no contemporary investigation into magic has taken the trouble to see whether his views can be improved upon. When the origin of the Greek terms *magos* and *mageia* is mentioned, scholars invariably refer to Nock.<sup>14</sup> Yet a closer look at Nock’s article soon reveals that he did not collect all the available evidence and that his views on Iranian religion are outdated;<sup>15</sup> moreover important new evidence has been discovered both on the Iranian and the Greek fronts since the appearance of his study.

Given the recent developments, it seems a fitting subject for this contribution in honour of Eitrem to investigate once again the question where, when and why the terms *magos* and *mageia* arose in Greece. In an Appendix, I will conclude with making some observations on another, related subject: the famous opposition of magic versus religion.

#### The birth of *magos* and *mageia*

It is evidently impossible to discuss the meaning of the terms *magos* and *mageia* for the whole of antiquity. As the Magi were closely associated with the Persian king and his empire,<sup>16</sup> I limit myself to the period before the arrival of Alexander the Great, when their place in society and, perhaps, their doctrines must have undergone more or less serious changes.<sup>17</sup> In this period, the oldest attestation of the word *magos* occurs in a passage of the philosopher Heraclitus as given by Clement of Alexandria in his *Protreptikos* (2.22.2). On the question as to who is the object of Heraclitus’ prophecies, the Church Father provides the following quote: ‘those who wander in the night (*nyktipolois*): Magi (*magois*), bacchants (*bakchois*), maenads (*lênais*), initiates (*mystais*)’ (fr. 14 DK).<sup>18</sup> There are various oddities in the quotation: the term used for ‘bacchant’ is not attested before Euripides, that of ‘initiate’ without any

<sup>10</sup> A. D. Nock, Paul and the Magus, in F. Jackson and K. Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity* V (London, 1933) 164–88, reprinted in Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Z. Stewart (Oxford, 1972) I.308–30.

<sup>11</sup> For Nock see the bibliography mentioned by Zeph Stewart in his ‘Introduction’ to Nock, *Essays*; add now W. M. Calder III, *Men in Their Books* (Hildesheim, 1998) 233–4, 284f.

<sup>12</sup> Cited by Stewart in his ‘Introduction’ to Nock, *Essays*.

<sup>13</sup> For Nilsson see J. Mejer, Martin P. Nilsson, in W. W. Briggs and W. M. Calder III (eds.), *Classical Scholarship. A biographical encyclopedia* (New York, 1990) 335–40; W. M. Calder III (ed.), *Further Letters of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff* (Hildesheim, 1994) 151–78.

<sup>14</sup> See more recently K. Rigsby, Teiresias as Magus in *Oedipus Rex*, *GRBS* 17 (1976) 109–14 at 110; H. S. Versnel, Some reflections on the relationship magic-religion, *Numen* 38 (1991) 177–97 at 194 n. 14; J. Gager, Moses the Magician, *Helios* 21 (1994) 179–88 at 187 n. 8; Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 24 n. 1 = *Magic*, 20 n. 1.

<sup>15</sup> As is noted by A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden, 1997) 222 n. 62.

<sup>16</sup> E. J. Bickerman, *Religions and Politics in the Hellenistic and Roman periods* (Como, 1985) 619–41 (with H. Tadmor); P. Briant, *Histoire de l’empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* I (Paris, 1996) 256–8; De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 387–403 (a well balanced analysis of the early *magoi*).

<sup>17</sup> This aspect of the Magi is not taken into consideration in recent studies of their position in the Persian empire, but seems to me highly likely.

<sup>18</sup> I follow the punctuation argued by Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 25 = *Magic*, 21.

(implicit) qualification, such as 'of Eleusis', not before the Derveni papyrus (below) or the Orphic gold-tablet of Hipponium (v. 16: ca. 400 BC),<sup>19</sup> and that for 'maenad' not before Theocritus XXVI. As Clement's tendency to interpret and expand his sources is well-known, one may have one's doubts about the authenticity of the precise wording of the quotation.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, we should never forget our lacunose knowledge of early Greek literature: it is only two decades ago that the word *nyktipolos* emerged in a fragment of Aeschylus' *Psychagogoi* (F 273a.8 Radt),<sup>21</sup> whereas before it was known first from Euripides. However this may be, the presence of *magoi* in this enumeration seems to be authentic, since its meaning hardly points to magic but to practitioners of private cults, just like the other three categories which all belong to the Orphic-Dionysiac sphere.<sup>22</sup>

This particular meaning of *magos* occurs only three times in our evidence, all in relatively early texts. In addition to Heraclitus we find it in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Unfortunately, the precise date of this play is unclear, but there is a general consensus that it belongs to the thirties or twenties of the fifth century. When Oedipus has concluded that Creon has conspired with Teiresias to overthrow him, he denounces him for setting upon him 'this *magos* hatcher of plots, this crafty begging priest, who has sight only when it comes to profit, but in his art is blind' (387–9, tr. Lloyd-Jones, slightly adapted). In this passage *magos* must mean something negative like 'quack, charlatan',<sup>23</sup> still very much as in Heraclitus. The connection with the begging priests also occurs in *On the Sacred Disease*. This treatise on epilepsy is ascribed to Hippocrates but generally dated to the end of the fifth century or even to the beginning of the fourth century; it also is the first pamphlet-length attack on magic in our sense of the word. According to the anonymous author, those people who first called the disease 'sacred', were the sort of people who are 'now *magoi* and purifiers and begging priests and humbugs. These are exactly the people who claim to be very pious and to possess a superior knowledge' (2). In a derogatory manner, the *magoi* are again combined with begging priests and other private religious practitioners, as in Sophocles.<sup>24</sup>

The connection of *magoi* with magic starts to appear not in philosophy but in tragedy. Photius (s.v. *magous*) mentions that *mageia* occurred in the tragedians (*TGF* Adesp. 592 Snell–Kannicht), but until now the word has not turned up with any certainty in the available evidence.<sup>25</sup> Our first example of *magos* occurs in Aeschylus' *Persians* (472 BC). In a roll-call of the dead Persian commanders, the messenger to the Persian queen mentions *Magos Arabos*, 'Magos the Arabian' (317). From Elamite tablets found in Persepolis we now know that the name \**Magus* was not uncommon among the Persians,<sup>26</sup> but Aeschylus' combination of Magos with Arabia also shows that he did not have a clue about the nature

<sup>19</sup> For the most recent edition of the 'Orphic' gold tablets see C. Riedweg, *Initiation – Tod – Unterwelt: Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblättchen*, in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998) 359–98 at 389–98.

<sup>20</sup> As do M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus* (Merida, 1967) 465–7; G. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience* (Cambridge, 1979) 12 n. 18; Rigsby, Teiresias, 110; M. Papatheophanes, Heraclitus of Ephesus, the Magi, and the Achaemenids, *Iranica Antiqua* 20 (1985) 101–61; A. Henrichs, Namenlosigkeit und Euphemismus: Zur Ambivalenz der chthonischen Mächte im attischen Drama, in H. Hofmann and A. Harder (eds.), *Fragmenta dramatica* (Göttingen, 1991) 161–201 at 190f. Its authenticity is accepted by Ch. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1979) 262 (with some qualms); M. Conche, *Héraclite. Fragments* (Paris, 1986) 167–70; T. Robinson, *Heraclitus. Fragments* (Toronto, 1987) 85f; Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 25 = *Magic*, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Henrichs, Namenlosigkeit und Euphemismus, 190.

<sup>22</sup> This is well observed by Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 25 = *Magic*, 21f.

<sup>23</sup> Rigsby, Teiresias, 113, suggests 'kingmaker' and is followed by E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford, 1989) 194 n. 107, but refuted by R. Dawe, *Sophocles: Oedipus Rex* (Cambridge, 1982) 132f.

<sup>24</sup> For the begging priests see P. Stengel, *Agyrtes 2, RE I* (Stuttgart, 1894) 915–7; Fraenkel on Aesch. *Ag.* 1273.

<sup>25</sup> It has been suspected in Aeschylus F \*\*36b.2 II.7 Radt by E. Cantarella, *I nuovi frammenti Eschilei di Ossirinco* (Naples, [1948]) 21.

<sup>26</sup> M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana* (Vienna, 1973) 187; R. Schmitt, *Die Iranier-Namen bei Aischylos* (Vienna, 1978) 38f.

of the Persian Magi. And indeed, the frequent attempts at identifying Persian religious elements in his *Persae* have not been very persuasive.<sup>27</sup>

The situation is different with the later Euripides. In his *Suppliants* of ca. 424–420 BC Iphigenia says how much she hates those who try to prolong their life with *mageumata*, ‘charms, spells’ (1110); in the *Iphigeneia in Tauris* (1338) of ca. 414 BC the messenger relates how Iphigenia prepared the sacrifice of Orestes, ‘while she sang barbarous songs like a *magos*’ (*mageuosa*: 1338), and in the *Orestes* of 408 BC a Phrygian slave ascribes the escape of Helen to ‘black magic or the tricks of *magoi* or thefts by the gods’ (1497).

Towards the end of the fifth century we find the ‘two arts of *goêteia* and *mageia*’ in Gorgias’ apology for Helen (10). Although the passage is not crystal clear, it is the first certain mention of *mageia* in our texts. The second example occurs in the already mentioned *On the Sacred Disease*. As we have seen, the anonymous author connects *magoi* with purifiers, and the same combination recurs when the author somewhat later proceeds with the rhetorical question: ‘if somebody is able to remove the disease by purifying and *mageuôn* . . .’ (3). However, the latter term comes close to our ‘magic’ when the author rejects as human trickery the feat of a man bringing down the moon ‘*mageuôn* and sacrificing’ (4).<sup>28</sup> Finally, at the end of his work he once again stresses that a real healer ‘would not need to resort to purifications and *magiê* (v.l.: *mageumatôn*) and all that kind of charlatanism’ (18). It is clear that for the author *magoi* are people who practise healing techniques comparable to those of purifiers and begging priests, that is, to people of an inferior theology and an inferior cosmology.<sup>29</sup>

We have three negative examples left. In his *Republic* (572e), which for our purpose may be dated to the first half of the fourth century,<sup>30</sup> Plato speaks about the son of democratic man and his encouragement towards lawlessness by his father and relatives: ‘when these dread *magoi* and tyrant-makers come to realize that they have no hope of controlling the youth in any other way, they devise to engender in him a sort of passion etc.’ Less pronounced is his statement in the *Statesman* (280e), where we hear of the ‘*mageutikê* (sc. *technê*) regarding spells to ward off evils’, but considering Plato’s rejection of magic, it can hardly be interpreted in a positive manner; still, the passage is interesting, since it seems to be the first to speak of magic as a *technê*,<sup>31</sup> an expression which will later become especially popular in Latin.<sup>32</sup> Finally, in 330 Aeschines (3.137) denounces Demosthenes as a ‘*magos* and sorcerer’ as no scoundrel before him has ever been.

Until now I have focused on the more dubious *magoi*, at least from a Greek point of view, but concomitant with them we also hear about authentic Magi, the hereditary technologists of the sacred from western Iran. These were probably mentioned first in Greek literature by Xanthos of Lydia, an area with a strong Persian presence.<sup>33</sup> Xanthos was an older contemporary of Herodotus,<sup>34</sup> who had dedicated a part of his work on Lydian history to the *magoi*, which was later called *Magika*. In the two extant fragments he mixes fact and fiction by relating that the *magoi* practised incest (true) and wife-swapping

<sup>27</sup> See the refutation by Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 86–93.

<sup>28</sup> For the trick see H. Reiche, Myth and Magic in Cosmological Polemics, *RhM* 114 (1971) 296–329; B. Marzullo, Aristoph. *Nub.* 749–755, *Mus. Criticum* 21–22 (1986–87) 153–76; for more or less contemporary representations, M. Schmidt, Sorceresses, in E. Reeder (ed.), *Pandora* (Baltimore, 1995) 57–62 at 61.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Lloyd, *Magic*, 15–28; Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 32–5 = *Magic*, 30–2.

<sup>30</sup> For this complicated question see now D. Nails, The Dramatic Date of Plato’s *Republic*, *CJ* 93 (1998) 383–96.

<sup>31</sup> Note now also its occurrence in *SEG* 41.981 and, probably, *PLitPalauRib* 26 a7, b3, cf. A. Stramaglia, *ZPE* 88 (1991) 77.

<sup>32</sup> J.-B. Clerc, *Homines Magici. Étude sur la sorcellerie et la magie dans la société romaine impériale* (Bern, 1995) 154.

<sup>33</sup> N. V. Sekunda, Achaemenid colonization in Lydia, *Rev. Et. Anc.* 87 (1985) 7–29; Briant, *Histoire de l’empire perse* I, 721–5. As Fritz Graf suggests to me, Magi may well have been active in the cult of Zeus Baradates (*SEG* 29.1205; 36.1089).

<sup>34</sup> See now Bob Fowler, *JHS* 116 (1996) 64; the discussion in *FGrH* 1001.

(untrue),<sup>35</sup> but he is the first Greek to mention Zarathustra,<sup>36</sup> if in that curious and still unexplained Greek form of Zoroaster.<sup>37</sup> According to Momigliano, 'Xanthus also referred to the Magi without apparently connecting them with Zoroaster'.<sup>38</sup> Although our evidence is much too fragmentary for such a conclusion, his younger contemporary Ktesias certainly seems to have called Zoroaster a Magus.<sup>39</sup>

Xanthos' *magoi* do not look like 'charlatans', and neither do they, on the whole, in the work of Herodotus, who is still our best source on the position and nature of the earlier *magoi*. It is striking that the 'father of history' nowhere feels the need to introduce the *magoi*, but evidently presupposes familiarity with them on the part of his readers. According to Herodotus, they were specialists in the interpretation of dreams (1.107–8, 120, 128; 7.19) and solar eclipses (7.37). They were also indispensable for libations (7.43) and for sacrifices (7.113–4, 191), where they sang a theogony (1.132). Moreover, they observed the rites of exposure and killed noxious creatures (1.140). At least one of these characteristics recurs in the early fifth-century Elamite tablets found in Persepolis, where a Magus receives wine for a particular ceremony, *lan*.<sup>40</sup>

It is only once that Herodotus seems to connect the Magi with magic. That is when he uses the term *pharmakeusantes*, 'hocus-pocus' (Van Groningen) for their ritual in his report of the horse sacrifice by the Magi during the Persian crossing of the Thracian river Strymon (7.114). The verb derives from *pharmakon*, 'philtre, medicine', which produced not only the male *pharmakeus*, 'sorcerer', but also the female *pharmakis*.<sup>41</sup> In a subtle article, the Swiss archaeologist Margot Schmidt has pointed out that sorceresses were absent from the citizen women of classical Athens, since they lacked the social space to perform sorcery; whenever they are mentioned they are foreigners, such as Medea or the Thessalian sorceresses of the *Clouds* (749).<sup>42</sup> This Athenian social condition, which may well have been prevalent in the whole of Greece, will also be the reason why both *magos* and *goês* (below) lacked female equivalents.<sup>43</sup> Considering the etymology, the term *pharmakis* was probably once limited to a woman who collected herbs for magic,<sup>44</sup> but gradually it must have absorbed (or: been ascribed) qualities from the male sorcerers.

After this brief excursion into Greek gender problems, let us now return to male magicians. Some of Herodotus' information about the Magi recurs in Xenophon's *Cyropaedy*, where they have to sing hymns to all the gods at sunrise (8.1.23) and to chose the gods to whom to sacrifice (8.1.23, 3.11). From Xenophon's younger contemporaries, Dino mentions that the Magi were interpreters of dreams (*FGrH* 690 F 10), and Theopompus (*FGrH* 115 F 64), in perhaps the most interesting information of it all, that the Magi taught the resurrection.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>35</sup> For the incest see now De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 424–32.

<sup>36</sup> Xanthos *FGrH* 765 F 31–2, cf. P. Kingsley, Meetings with Magi: Iranian Themes among the Greeks, from Xanthus of Lydia to Plato's Academy, *JRAS* III 5 (1995) 171–209.

<sup>37</sup> For possible explanations of the form see most recently I. Gershevitch, Approaches to Zoroaster's Gathas, *Iran* 33 (1995) 19–24; R. Schmitt, Onomastica Iranica Platonica, in C. Mueller-Goldingen and K. Sier (eds.), *Lenaika. Festschrift für Carl Werner Müller* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1996) 81–102 at 93–8.

<sup>38</sup> A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1975) 142.

<sup>39</sup> Ktesias *FGrH* 690 F 1; Kephallion *FGrH* 93 F 1 and Jacoby ad loc.

<sup>40</sup> R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (Chicago, 1969) no. 758; Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse* I, 258.

<sup>41</sup> For the terms see W. Artelt, *Studien zur Geschichte der Begriffe Heilmittel und Gift = Studien zur Geschichte der Medizin* 23 (Leipzig, 1937) 38–96.

<sup>42</sup> Schmidt, Sorceresses, 60.

<sup>43</sup> *Magos* is not used for females until the Roman period, cf. *AP* 5.16; *Luc. Asin.* 4; *Aesop.* 117 Halm; *Et. Magnum* 103, 18 Gaisford. Latin *maga* first appears in Seneca, *Herc. O.* 523, 526. This is why I do not follow Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 27, in translating *mageousa* in *IT* 1338 as 'wie eine Magierin'.

<sup>44</sup> For women using herbs in magic see *Od.* 4.220 (Helen), 10.213 (Kirke); Sophocles F 534 Radt (Medea); Melanipides *PGM* 757 Page (Danaids).

<sup>45</sup> De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 224f.; idem, Shadow and Resurrection, *Bull. Asia Inst.* NS 9 (1995 [1997]) 215–24.

In addition to these historians, it is especially the philosophers who were interested in the Magi. Plato's pupil Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 68 Wehrli<sup>2</sup>) wrote a dialogue *Zoroaster*, which, presumably, featured his Magus who had circumnavigated Africa before visiting the court of Gelo at Syracuse (fr. 69–70 Wehrli<sup>2</sup>). According to Aristotle, the Magi were older than the Egyptians (fr. 6 Rose), and in his *Metaphysics* (1091b8) he included them among those who hold that 'good' is the source of all; other details can be found in his pupils Eudemus (fr. 89 Wehrli<sup>2</sup>), Clearchus (fr. 13 Wehrli<sup>2</sup>) and Aristoxenus (fr. 13 Wehrli<sup>2</sup>). This Peripatetic interest makes it even more likely that the almost certainly spurious Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades Maior* has to be assigned to the same milieu,<sup>46</sup> since it mentions that Persian educators teach their youths 'the *mageia* of Zoroaster, the son of Horomadzos: that is the cult of the gods' (1.122a). The explanation is clearly apologetic, just as Dino (*FGrH* 690 F 5) had already denied that the Magi practised 'black magic' (*goêtikên mageian*).

Having looked at all the testimonies regarding Magi and *magoi* in the fifth and fourth centuries, we can now draw the following conclusion: in tragedy, rhetorics and earlier philosophy, *magos* is a term of abuse, whereas historians and Aristotelian philosophers tend to take the Magi seriously. The two traditions converge, so to speak, in the late fourth century when the second group asserts the claims of the 'real' Magi against the abusive interpretation of the first group. Moreover, the abusive usage of *magos* is hardly attested before the 420s in Athens, when we suddenly start to find a whole cluster of references.

This development has not been taken into account into the most two recent explanations for the semantic development from Magus to magician. According to Peter Kingsley the Magi were always magicians in the eyes of the Greeks, since they controlled the weather and knew how to return from the dead.<sup>47</sup> However, attempts at controlling the weather were perfectly normal in Greek religion,<sup>48</sup> and Magical returns from the dead are not attested before Roman times.<sup>49</sup>

Fritz Graf, on the other hand, has looked for an explanation in Tylorian terms. In his *Primitive Culture*, Edward Tylor (1832–1917), one of the founding fathers of social anthropology and the history of religion, observes that many cultures called their neighbours 'magician', such as the southern Scandinavians did with the Lapps and Finns.<sup>50</sup> However, like Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) in his classic study of magic, Tylor also observed that these neighbours are usually of a lesser development.<sup>51</sup> Now there can be little doubt that the Greeks in general, and the Athenians in particular, had developed a rhetoric in which the Persians were 'the Other', the opponents whose despotism, slavishness, luxury and cruelty were the exact opposite of all the virtues of the Greeks.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, though, they had been highly impressed by the Persians and in many spheres of life busily copied them.<sup>53</sup> One can thus

<sup>46</sup> H. J. Krämer, in H. Flashar (ed.), *Die Philosophie der Antike. 3: Ältere Akademie, Aristoteles, Peripatos* (Basel and Stuttgart, 1983) 124.

<sup>47</sup> P. Kingsley, *Greeks, Shamans and Magi*, *Studia Iranica* 23 (1994) 187–98; see also his interesting but usually overconfident *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic* (Oxford, 1995) 225–6.

<sup>48</sup> P. Stengel, *Opferbräuche der Griechen* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1910) 146–53; J. Harrison, *Themis* (Cambridge, 1927<sup>2</sup>) 76–82; W. Fiedler, *Studien zum antiken Wetterzauber* (Diss. Würzburg, 1930); M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Munich, 1967<sup>3</sup>) 116–7; M. Blöcker, *Wetterzauber. Zu einem Glaubenskomplex des frühen Mittelalters*, *Francia* 9 (1981) 117–31.

<sup>49</sup> Lucian, *Nec.* 6; Ph. Gignoux, *Les quatre inscriptions du Mage Kirdir, textes et concordances* (Paris, 1991).

<sup>50</sup> C.-H. Tillhagen, *Finnen und Lappen als Zauberkundige in der skandinavischen Volksüberlieferung*, in *Kontakte und Grenzen. Probleme der Volks-, Kultur- und Sozialforschung. Festschrift für Gerhard Heilfurth zu seinem 60. Geburtstag* (Göttingen, 1969) 129–43.

<sup>51</sup> E. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* I (2 vls, London, 1871) = *The Collected Works of Edward Burnett Tylor* III (London, 1994) 102–4; M. Mauss, *Théorie générale de la magie*, *L'Année sociologique* 7 (1902–03) 1–146 at 26–27 = Mauss, *Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Paris, 1950) 23 = Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, tr. R. Brain (New York, 1972) 31.

<sup>52</sup> Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 56–100 and *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> See now the splendid overview by M. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the fifth century BC. A study in cultural receptivity* (Cambridge, 1997); W. Gauer, *Die Aegaeis, Hellas und die Barbaren*, *Saeculum* 49 (1998) 22–60.



hardly say that they looked down on Persia in the same way in which southern Scandinavians once viewed Lapps and Finns. Although the element of 'the Other' may well have played a role, there is, I suggest, also a more concrete reason as to why the Greeks came to consider the Magi as magicians.

Before coming to that reason, let us first look at the question as to when the Greeks will have first witnessed Magi. According to (Pseudo?-)Aristotle a Syrian Magus had predicted a violent death to Socrates (fr. 32 Rose), but this anecdote is just as untrustworthy as Seneca's report that Magi were present in Athens at the moment of Plato's death and had sacrificed to him – a story which looks like an invention by his later followers, who even claimed that Magi had come to Athens to learn from Plato.<sup>54</sup> Although these notices are unreliable, the Ionians must already have had opportunities to see Magi, who probably also accompanied Xerxes in AD 480, in the later sixth century. As in his *Acharnians* (91–122: 425 BC) Aristophanes parodies an embassy scene which assumes knowledge of a Persian embassy on the part of his audience,<sup>55</sup> Magi may also have been intermittently witnessed during such Persian visits in the course of the fifth century.<sup>56</sup>

However this may be, we move onto firmer ground with a different notice. It is now nearly forty years ago that in Derveni, a few kilometres from modern Saloniki, Greek excavators discovered the completely charred top of a papyrus roll on the funeral pyre in a tomb of about 300 BC. More than 200 fragments were recovered which together make up more than 24 columns of text. The content proves to be an allegorical commentary on an Orphic theogony in terms of Presocratic physics,<sup>57</sup> of which the original text must have been written around 420–400 BC.<sup>58</sup> The commentary constitutes the largest parts of the extant papyrus (20 columns), but it is preceded by a much shorter theological introduction (6 columns).<sup>59</sup> This part was already known, but more fragments have been published in 1997 and they, rather unexpectedly, reveal the activity of *magoi*.<sup>60</sup> In what is now column VI we read:

. . . prayers and sacrifices assuage the souls, and the incantation (*epôidê*) of the *magoi* is able to change the *daimones* when they get in the way. *Daimones* in the way are enemies to souls. This is why the *magoi* perform the sacrifice, just as if they were paying a penalty (. . .) And on the offerings they pour water and milk, from which they also make the libations (. . .) Initiates make preliminary sacrifices to the Eumenides in the same way as the *magoi* do. For the Eumenides are souls.

There are many interesting aspects to this fragment,<sup>61</sup> but for our purpose we will only discuss three of them. First, it seems now reasonable to assume that at the end of the fifth century wandering *magoi* (be it Persian or Hellenised ones) were present in the Greek world precisely at the moment that we find the first references to 'magical' *magoi*. Unfortunately, we cannot say exactly where these private *magoi* practised, since nothing is known about the authorship or place of composition of the original text.

<sup>54</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* 58.31, cf. P. Boyancé, *Le culte des muses chez les philosophes grecs* (Paris, 1972<sup>2</sup>) 255 n. 3; L. G. Westerink (ed.), *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* (Amsterdam, 1962) 15: 6.20–2.

<sup>55</sup> C. Chiasson, Pseudartabas and his eunuchs: *Acharnians* 91–122, *CPh* 79 (1984) 131–6.

<sup>56</sup> Embassies could make a lasting impression, as is well illustrated by the visit of the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaiologos to the Council of Ferrara of AD 1438, which is often reflected in contemporary paintings, cf. Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 90; add C. Ginzburg, *Indagine su Piero* (Turin, 1994<sup>2</sup>) 35–7, 82–4.

<sup>57</sup> For the allegorical aspect see now A. Laks, Between Religion and Philosophy: the Function of Allegory in the Derveni Papyrus, *Phronesis* 42 (1997) 121–42.

<sup>58</sup> A. Laks and G. Most (eds.), *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford, 1997) 56 n. 56 (Ch. Kahn: ca. 400 BC), 174 n. 32 (W. Burkert: ca. 420–400 BC). D. Sider, *ibidem*, 138 wonders whether this is not even too early.

<sup>59</sup> For the connection between the two parts see G. W. Most, The fire next time. Cosmology, allegoresis, and salvation in the Derveni Papyrus, *JHS* 117 (1997) 117–35 at 125–31.

<sup>60</sup> K. Tsantsanoglou, The First Columns of the Derveni Papyrus and Their Religious Significance, in Laks and Most, *Studies*, 93–128. I use the translation by Laks and Most, *ibidem*, 9–22.

<sup>61</sup> In addition to Tsantsanoglou, The First Columns, see now for a first discussion of the new text, A. Henrichs, Dromena und Legomena. Zum rituellen Selbstverständnis der Griechen, in Graf, *Ansichten griechischer Rituale*, 33–71 at 33–5.

Many possibilities have been canvassed, from Stesimbrotus to Prodicus, but none is really convincing.<sup>62</sup> The fact that the dialect is Ionic with an Attic overlay might suggest some connection with Athens,<sup>63</sup> but Bob Fowler informs me that his just completed study of the dialect of the mythographic fragments shows that at the end of the fifth century Ionic writers, who may have had no personal connection with Attica, already started to adopt Attic forms. In any case, more than a century later Philochorus did indeed read the commentary.<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, whereas libations of milk are attested for the *Avesta* and recur in Strabo's description of the Cappadocian Magi,<sup>65</sup> water seems to have been completely absent from Zoroastrian libations. Geo Widengren has compared the beaker with water in the Mithraic mysteries, but none of his many examples mentions Zoroastrian libations of water.<sup>66</sup> In other words, the author (or his Magi) must have adapted their rites to those of the Greeks, who actually did libate with water.<sup>67</sup> Thirdly, the *magoi* use incantations: the term used, *epôidê*, is typical for a charm and as such already occurs in Homer;<sup>68</sup> it also fits the frequent references to the singing of the Magi.<sup>69</sup>

The activity of these *magoi* may well have given rise to a negative valuation for two reasons in particular. First, the incomprehensibility of their Avestan will have suggested *voces magicae* and possibly influenced Euripides' picture of the 'barbarous songs' of Iphigeneia (above).<sup>70</sup> Secondly, unlike Greek priests the Magi customarily whispered their Avestan and other ritual texts in a very low voice: Prudentius' *Zoroastreos susurros* (*Apoth.* 494).<sup>71</sup> This whispering must have made the activities of Magi look like 'magical' rites in the eyes of the ancients, since murmuring was closely associated with magic by both Greeks and Romans.<sup>72</sup> In addition to them being 'the Other', there are then also two very concrete reasons as to why (all?) Greeks will have looked at the Persian Magi as sorcerers. Although the Greeks must have seen Magi before, the available evidence strongly suggests that familiarity with wandering Magi became much stronger in the final decades of the fifth century, as is also illustrated by (directly or

<sup>62</sup> The various suggestions have been listed and refuted by R. Janko, *The Physicist as Hierophant*, *ZPE* 118 (1997) 61–94, whose own suggestion, Diagoras, is hardly more persuasive than those refuted by him.

<sup>63</sup> Janko, *The Physicist*, 62.

<sup>64</sup> D. Obbink, *A Quotation of the Derveni Papyrus in Philodemus*, *Cronache Ercolanesi* 24 (1994) 1–39.

<sup>65</sup> Strabo 15.3.14 with the detailed discussion by De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 139–42. For Cappadocian Magi note also *CIMRM* 50 no. 19 and *RECAM* II.404.

<sup>66</sup> G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans* (Stuttgart, 1965) 181–4, followed by Henrichs, *Dromena*, 46; for water in the Mithraic mysteries see now also R. Gordon, *Image and Value in the Greco-Roman World. Studies in Mithraism and Religious Art* (Aldershot, 1996) VI.122–4.

<sup>67</sup> F. Graf, *Milch, Honig und Wein. Zum Verständnis der Libation im griechischen Ritual*, in *Perennitas. Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich* (Rome, 1969) 209–21; A. Henrichs, *The Eumenides and wineless libation in the Derveni papyrus*, in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples, 1984) 255–68.

<sup>68</sup> G. Lanata, *Medicina magica e religione popolare in Grecia fino all'età di Ippocrate* (Rome, 1967) 46–51; Boyancé, *Le culte*, 33–59; W. D. Furley, *Besprechung und Behandlung. Zur Form und Funktion von EPÔIDAI in der griechischen Zaubermagie*, in G. W. Most *et al.* (eds.), *Philanthropia kai Eusebeia. Festschrift für Albrecht Dihle zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen, 1993) 80–104.

<sup>69</sup> *Hdt.* 7.191; *Xen. Cyr.* 8.1.23; *Curtius Rufus* 3.3.9, 5.1.22; *Catullus* 90.5; *Strabo* 15.3.14; *Dio Chrys.* 36.39, 42; *Paus.* 5.27.5. For an excellent discussion see De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 362–4.

<sup>70</sup> On the *voces magicae* see now Brashear, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 3429–38; H. S. Versnel, *Die Poetik der Zaubersprüche*, in T. Schabert and R. Brague (eds.), *Die Macht des Wortes* (Munich, 1997) 233–97.

<sup>71</sup> As is frequently attested, cf. J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, 2 vls (Paris, 1938) II.112–3, 245, 285–6; Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans*, 249–50; J. C. Greenfield, *rtyn mgws*, in S. Hoenig and L. Stitskin (eds.), *Joshua Finkel Festschrift* (New York, 1974) 63–9.

<sup>72</sup> Admittedly, our first Greek examples are only Hellenistic, but they are so widespread and persistent, that it seems hyper-critical not to assume the same for classical times, cf. *Theoc.* 2.11, 62; *Orph. Lith.* 320; *Luc. Nec.* 7; *Ach. Tat.* 2.7; *Helioid.* 6.14.4; L. Moscardi, "Murmur" nella terminologia magica, *SIFC* 48 (1976) 254–62; D. K. van Mal-Maeder, *Apulée, Les Métamorphoses: Livre II, 1–20* (Diss. Groningen, 1997) 70; E. Valette-Cagnac, *La lecture à Rome* (s. l., 1997) 42–7; P. W. van der Horst, *Hellenism-Judaism-Christianity. Essays on Their Interaction* (Leuven, 1998<sup>2</sup>) 300–2.

indirectly) the Derveni papyrus. The areas where this development took place must have been Ionia and Athens, exactly where we would have suspected the possible presence of Magi.

Now in religion, as of course in economics, it is not enough to prove a 'supply', but there must also be a 'demand' from religious 'consumers'. Fortunately, this 'demand' is well attested in late fifth-century Athens, where we witness a growing dissatisfaction with traditional religion and an increasing interest in private cults.<sup>73</sup> The presence of privately practising Magi perfectly fits this development.

The development did not mean that from that moment on *magos/mageia* became the ruling designation for the area of magic, witchcraft and sorcery. The Greeks had already the terms *goês/goêteia*,<sup>74</sup> which continued to remain popular next to *magos/mageia*, perhaps even more popular, since Demosthenes, for example, uses *goês* not *magos* in his insults.<sup>75</sup> As Greek linguistic purists of the Roman period considered *goês* 'more Attic' than *magos*,<sup>76</sup> *mageia* and cognates never became really popular in later Greek culture. The Romans lacked this prejudice and thus used *magia*, *magicus* and *magus/maga* much more frequently than the Greeks ever did. However, the status of the Persian Magi always remained a positive factor in the valuation of the term *magos/magus*, as was still the case in early modern Europe,<sup>77</sup> and later 'magicians' therefore called themselves not *goês* or *pharmakeus*, but *magos/magus*.

#### APPENDIX: Magic versus Religion

Over a long period of time, social anthropologists have now been debating the question whether there is a difference between magic and religion, and if so, how magic should be defined.<sup>78</sup> Given the greatly increased attention to magic among classicists, it is hardly surprising that this debate has now finally reached us as well. In an important article, my compatriot Henk Versnel has recently argued that 'rejection of the word "magic" will soon turn out to be unworkable' and that 'it would be utterly unpractical to completely eliminate religion as one of the obvious models of contrast'. He even argues that 'the question whether distinctions should be drawn between magic *and* religion or magic and other features *within* religion is (...) of minor importance. What is important is to make a distinction between magic and non-magic, and it will be impossible – and, *if* possible, utterly impractical – to completely eliminate religion as one obvious model of contrast'.<sup>79</sup> Versnel is a declared follower of the etic approach, that is, the use of concepts developed by us, not by the actors, in order to have a common platform for communication and discussion. This is undoubtedly the most satisfactory position from a scholarly point of view and in this respect I wholeheartedly agree with him.<sup>80</sup> Yet, in order to be workable, the etic definition of a concept should always be as close as possible to the actors' point of view: if not, it will soon cease to be a useful definition. In this respect questions may arise about Versnel's position that we need religion as an obvious model of contrast to magic. I would like to make five observations which throw doubt on his (but not only his!) position.

<sup>73</sup> Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1994) 84–97 = Bremmer, *Götter, Mythen und Heiligtümer im antiken Griechenland* (Darmstadt, 1996) 94–108, 147–52.

<sup>74</sup> G. Dellings, *goês*, in G. Kittel (ed.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* I (Stuttgart, 1933) 737–8; W. Burkert, *Goês*. Zum griechischen Schamanismus, *RhM* NF 105 (1962) 36–55; M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (London, 1978) 69f.

<sup>75</sup> Dem. 18.276, 19.102, 109; 29.32.

<sup>76</sup> Phrynichus 56.8 de Borries.

<sup>77</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: the ideas of witchcraft in early modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997) 215–6, 232, 247.

<sup>78</sup> For a short survey with bibliography see Graf, *Schadenzauber*, 19–21 = *Magic*, 14–8; add now J. Braarvig, *Magic: Reconsidering the Grand Dichotomy*, and E. Thomassen, *Is magic a subclass of ritual?*, both forthcoming in the *Proceedings of the First Samson Eitrem Seminar* (note 2).

<sup>79</sup> Versnel, *Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion*, 177, 187 (with extensive bibliography).

<sup>80</sup> For interesting considerations about the problem see now also B. Boudewijnse, *Fieldwork at Home*, *Etnofoor* (Amsterdam) 7 (1994) 73–95.

First, attention in the debate is always focused on the definition of magic, as if the meaning of religion is generally agreed upon. In fact, religion was not yet conceptualized as a separate sphere of life in the Greco-Roman period and the term ‘religion’ only received its modern meaning in the immediate post-Reformation era, when the first contours of a separate religious sphere started to become visible.<sup>81</sup>

Secondly, the example of religion suggests that when analysing a concept we must also be sensitive to its semantic development. Here, we may point to the relatively late appearance of the word magic in Western Europe. Linguistically, English *magyk* long existed alongside *magique*, which derived from Old French *art magique*. Modern French *magie* replaces *magique* only in the sixteenth century, German *Magie* is not to be found before the seventeenth century and Danish *magi* appears only in the eighteenth century.<sup>82</sup> Evidently, in the period stretching from the later Middle Ages to the beginning of the early modern era a need was felt for a new term, although the reasons for this development are still largely obscure.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, magic was not a static concept. The Renaissance invented the idea of a *magia naturalis* and the Romantics considered magic an art which could help ‘das Göttliche zu produzieren’ (Fr. Schlegel).<sup>84</sup> To oppose magic to religion, then, is to use two terms and concepts, which did not exist in antiquity, but are both the product of late- and post-medieval Europe.<sup>85</sup>

Thirdly, we should take into consideration that the ancients themselves did not oppose magic to religion. This becomes apparent when we look at both pagan and Christian positions. In his *Apology*, Apuleius first states that *magiam (...) artem esse dis immortalibus acceptam*, but he knows of course that this is the favourable interpretation of *magia*. He therefore continues that *more vulgari a magus* is somebody who through a *communio loquendi cum deis immortalibus* effects everything he wants through ‘an incredible power of incantations’ (*omnia quae velit incredibili quadam vi cantaminum*: 26.6). One cannot fail to note that Apuleius does not contrast magic with religion, and neither do the early Church fathers. Admittedly, Justin points out that, unlike Christians, Jews and pagans exorcise with drugs, incense and incantations; Irenaeus stresses the absence of incantations and any other ‘wicked, curious art’ in Christian miracles, and Origen denies that Christians use incantations, names of demons or magical formulas. Yet none of them formulates the debate in terms of an opposition magic-religion.<sup>86</sup>

Fourthly, in these texts the contrast is not between magic and religion *tout court*, but between magic and normative religious practice. Evidently, magic was construed dialectically in terms of what it was not.<sup>87</sup> Does that mean that magic is an unworkable concept? Not necessarily so. When we look at the

<sup>81</sup> Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1994) 2–4 = *Götter, Mythen und Heiligtümer*, 3–5, and “Religion”, “Ritual” and the Opposition “Sacred vs. Profane”, in Graf, *Ansichten griechischer Rituale*, 9–32 at 11f.; for additional bibliography and an improbable etymology of *religio* see A. Bergmann, *Die >Grundbedeutung< des lateinischen Wortes Religion* (Marburg, 1998).

<sup>82</sup> See, respectively, *The Oxford English Dictionary* IX (Oxford, 1989<sup>2</sup>) 185; R. L. Wagner, “*Sorcier*” et “*magiciens*”. *Contribution à l’histoire du vocabulaire de la Magie* (Paris, 1939); W. v. Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* VI.1 (Basel, 1969) s.v. *magia, magicus* (T. Reinhard); J. and W. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* VI (Leipzig, 1885) 1445; *Ordbog over det Danske sprog* III (Copenhagen, 1932) 771.

<sup>83</sup> K. Goldammer, *Der göttliche Magier und die Magierin Natur* (Stuttgart, 1991) 15: Der Begriff, über den entstehungsgeschichtlich eigentlich wenig bekannt ist.

<sup>84</sup> For the semantic development note N. Henrichs, *Scientia magica*, in A. Diemer (ed.), *Der Wissenschaftsbegriff. Historische und systematische Untersuchungen* (Meisenheim, 1970) 30–46; K. Goldammer, *Magie*, in J. Ritter and K. Gründer (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* V (Basel and Stuttgart, 1980) 631–6 (inadequate); P. Zambelli, *L’ambigua natura della magia* (Milano, 1991).

<sup>85</sup> R. L. Fowler, *Greek Magic, Greek Religion, Ill. Class. Stud.* 20 (1995) 1–22, rightly stresses that the Greeks do not define the concept of magic in any clear way, let alone oppose it to religion.

<sup>86</sup> Justin, *Apol.* 2.6, *Dial.* 69, 85; Irenaeus, *Adv. haereses* 2.32.5; Origen, *c. Celsum* 1.6, 60 and 6.40; H. Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century* (Cambridge MA, 1983) 52–72; F. Heintz, *Simon “Le Magicien”: actes 8,5–25 et l’accusation de magie contre les prophètes thaumaturges dans l’antiquité* (Paris, 1997).

<sup>87</sup> I vary here an observation by Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 9 on the construction of witchcraft.

most frequent noted oppositions between what is normally called magic and religion, such as secret/public, night/day, individual/collective, anti-social/social, *voces magicae*/understandable language, coercive manipulation/supplicative negotiation, negative gods/positive gods and so on,<sup>88</sup> we cannot fail to note that the positive characteristics are approved of by most religions, just as the negative ones are generally disapproved of or negatively valued. Evidently, the structure of most religions is similar enough to share a common number of negative practices and values – dual classification and inversion being very widely spread ordering principles of ancient and, still, modern cosmology.<sup>89</sup> This ‘family resemblance’, to use the well-known Wittgensteinian term, between religions enables us to continue using magic as a concept with a recognisable referent to reality. However, at the same time we must always remain aware of the fact that cultures rarely agree in detail as to what constitutes magic. That is already clear in antiquity where magic only becomes thematized in later Classical Greece, whereas the Later Roman Empire seems obsessed with it.<sup>90</sup>

Fifthly and finally, it is usually neglected that the moment of birth of the opposition magic-religion is only recent and can be established fairly exactly. Indeed, James George Frazer himself, the author of the famous *The Golden Bough*, who did most to popularise the opposition, tells us in the preface to the second edition of his *opus magnum* (1900), which had been published with the new subtitle *A study in magic and religion*, that he had derived the opposition from Sir Alfred Lyall (1858–1936) and Frank Jevons (1835–1911),<sup>91</sup> the first an able colonial administrator in India and the second an average classicist and historian of religion in Durham. Lyall had opposed native Indian witchcraft to the ‘religion of civilization’ and Jevons had contrasted the race ‘less civilised’ with magic to the race ‘more civilised’ with religion.<sup>92</sup>

Now since the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease* the contrast between superstitious and ‘authentic’ religious practice has become a virtually fixed aspect of discussions of religion until the time of Frazer. However, the terms of this debate did not always remain the same. Whereas in antiquity the opposite of accepted religious practice could be expressed with the terms *deisidaimonia*, *mageia/magia* or *superstitio*, the latter term became the ruling concept in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, and it remained so until the nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup> Frazer changed this situation in two aspects. He not only subsumed the beliefs and practices which used to be called superstition under the category ‘magic’, but he also separated this category from religion in time. Whereas earlier generations of scholars had considered superstition a part, albeit a misguided one, of religion, Frazer suggested that magic had actually once preceded ‘authentic’ religion.<sup>94</sup>

Frazer’s temporal distinction between magic and religion was immediately criticised by folklorists and soon abandoned, but his use of the term magic became an instant scholarly success among anthro-

<sup>88</sup> Versnel, *Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion*, 178f.

<sup>89</sup> See now the interesting discussion of Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 31–79, with due recognition of the important work of Geoffrey Lloyd in this area.

<sup>90</sup> M. Th. Fögen, *Die Enteignung der Wahrsager. Studien zum kaiserlichen Wissensmonopol in der Spätantike* (Frankfurt, 1993); H. Kippenberg, *Magic in Roman Civil Discourse: Why Rituals could be Illegal*, in Schäfer and Kippenberg, *Envisioning Magic*, 137–63; V. Neri, *I marginali nell’ Occidente tardo antico* (Bari, 1998) 258–86.

<sup>91</sup> See also J. G. Frazer, *The Magic Art* I.1 (London, 1911) 224f.

<sup>92</sup> A. C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies* (London, 1882) 75–98 ~ *Asiatic Studies* I (London, 1899<sup>2</sup>) 99–130, who also propagated the view that magic is a primitive stage of science; F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion* (London, 1896) 36f.

<sup>93</sup> D. Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979) and *Aberglaube und Alter. Skizzen zur Geschichte eines polemischen Begriffes*, in D. Harmening et al. (eds.), *Volkskultur und Geschichte. Festschrift für Josef Dünninger* (Berlin, 1970) 210–35; C. Daxelmüller, *Vorwort*, in H. Bachtold-Stäubli (ed.), *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* I (Berlin, 1987<sup>2</sup>) V–XXXVI at XXV–XXXII; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 472–88.

<sup>94</sup> The same thought seems to have occurred to Tylor, cf. W. Hanegraaff, *The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic: The Occult Philosophy in Tylor and Frazer*, in A. Molendijk and P. Pels (eds.), *Religion in the Making. The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion* (Leiden, 1998) 253–75 at 262.

pologists.<sup>95</sup> Due to the more recent technological developments, we can now much easier gauge the nature of Frazer's influence in this respect. As I first showed in my discussion of the term 'ritual',<sup>96</sup> the computerisation of the catalogues of the university libraries enables us to search for certain key terms in the titles of books. It is illustrative of Frazer's new approach that books with both terms 'magic' and 'religion' in their title are not attested before the year 1900,<sup>97</sup> but virtually immediately become a normal feature of social anthropology and the history of religion after Frazer's work,<sup>98</sup> and they have remained thus ever since – witness the title of Keith Thomas' classic *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971). In fact, the very first book which uses the terms in the main title is *Magic and Religion* by Andrew Lang (1844–1912) of, note the year, 1901 – a clear indication of the interest Frazer had evoked with his new categorisation.<sup>99</sup> The opposition, then, is a typical product of the Victorian middle-classes with their strong need for positive self-definition against the colonial subjects abroad and the peasants at home.<sup>100</sup> It has no place in a discussion of magic in antiquity.<sup>101</sup>

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Jan N. Bremmer

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<sup>95</sup> For the reception of the second edition see R. Ackerman, *J. G. Frazer: his life and work* (Cambridge, 1987) 164–79; for the success of the term magic among anthropologists, G. W. Stocking, *After Tylor: British social anthropology 1888–1951* (Madison, 1995) 150.

<sup>96</sup> Bremmer, "Religion", "Ritual", 22f.

<sup>97</sup> As my colleague Lourens van den Bosch points out to me, the term 'magic' is also still absent from the indices of the books of Max Müller (1823–1900), the most famous historian of religion of the second half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>98</sup> The first examples are H. Hubert, *Étude sommaire de la représentation du temps dans la religion et la magie* (Paris, 1905); E. Westermarck, *Religion och magi* (Stockholm, 1907, 1920<sup>2</sup>); E. Doutte, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Alger, 1908); P. Giran, *Magie et religion annamites* (Paris, 1912); K. Beth, *Religion und Magie bei den Naturvölkern* (Leipzig, 1914); L. Deubner, *Magie und Religion* (Freiburg, 1922), reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften zur klassischen Altertumskunde* (Königstein, 1981) 275–98; W. H. R. Rivers, *Medicine, Magic, and Religion* (New York and London, 1924).

<sup>99</sup> A. Lang, *Magic and Religion* (London, 1901) with already a devastating critique of the categorisation (46–75).

<sup>100</sup> Cf. A. Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society* (London, 1988); H. Kuklick, *The savage within. The social history of British anthropology, 1885–1945* (Cambridge, 1991) 75–118; H. Kippenberg, *Die Entdeckung der Religionsgeschichte* (Munich, 1997) 120–42.

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