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MAGIC IN HISTORY

PRAYER, MAGIC, AND THE STARS IN THE ANCIENT AND LATE ANTIQUE WORLD

EDITED BY

SCOTT NOEGEL, JOEL WALKER, AND BRANNON WHEELER

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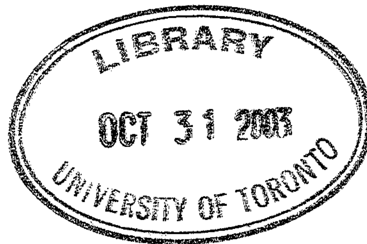
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Introduction

Scott B. Noegel, Joel T. Walker, and Brannon M. Wheeler

The thirteen essays in this volume have their genesis in an international conference that we organized at the University of Washington, held on 3–5 March 2000. The conference papers examined the manifold techniques and traditions, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, individual and communal, by which the people of the ancient and late antique world attempted to interpret and communicate with the divine powers of heaven and earth. Our goal at this conference, as in this volume, was to investigate the topic of magic and the stars in an interdisciplinary framework extending from the ancient Near East to the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic literatures of late antiquity.

Our interest in this subject has been inspired by parallel developments in several academic fields. Since the early 1980s, the fields of Classics and ancient history have witnessed a dramatic increase in academic publications on the subject of "magic."[1] The new wave of scholarship reflects one wing of a broader revival of research into the religion and mythology of the Graeco-Roman world that has developed since the late 1960s.[2] The new scholarship encompasses a variety of methodological approaches and emphases, but there are several common themes worth noting. First, there has been a veritable flood of new editions and translations of the major corpora of Graeco-Roman "magical" papyri, amulets, and other

1. For a cross section of current trends, see the papers from other recent conferences: Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 129 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995); Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, eds., *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium,* Studies in the History of Religions, 75 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997); and David R. Jordan, Hugo Montgomery, and Einar Thomassen, eds., *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4–8 May 1997,* Papers of the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4 (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999). See also Ramón Teja, ed., *Profecía, magia y adivinación en las religiones antiguas,* Codex Aqvilarensis, 17 (Palencia: Aguilar de Campoo, 2001); Leda Ciraolo and Jonathan Seidel, eds., *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World,* Ancient Magic and Divination II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002); and Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, eds., *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002). Richard Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic," in Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, eds., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, Ancient Greece, and Rome* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 159–275, includes a concise and valuable bibliographic essay (266–69).

2. On the historiographical background, see Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8–18.

artifacts.[3] The new collections of translated sources have made the magic of the ancient world accessible not only to other scholars and their students but to a sizable and diverse audience of general readers.

Second, recent work has provided compelling documentation for the broad area of overlap between "religion" and "magic" in the Graeco-Roman world.[4] From the courtrooms of classical Athens to the horse-racing stadia of late Roman North Africa, there is ample evidence for the deployment of magical rituals, objects, and words. These written, spoken, or sung words—whether we call them spells, incantations, or charms—draw upon a ritual and conceptual vocabulary closely linked to "official" forms of civic and public prayer.[5] In contrast to earlier scholarship, which tended to see such shared elements as evidence for magicians' surreptitious appropriation of public religion, recent scholarship has preferred to view "magical" and "religious" practices as part of a continuum that encompassed both individual and communal forms of piety. This perspective has the distinct merit of moving the study of ancient magic to a more central, respectable position in the field of Classical Studies.[6] As Fritz Graf has observed, "magic, in a certain sense, belongs to antiquity and its heritage, like temples, hexameters, and marble statues."[7]

A third characteristic of the "new wave" of scholarship on Graeco-Roman magic—its attention to the cross-cultural and international dimensions of magic in the Mediterranean world—charts a particularly exciting frontier. Recent research has clarified many aspects of the intimate relationship between Graeco-

3. Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986; 2d ed., 1992); Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze "Lamellae": Text and Commentary* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994); and esp. John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). For select literary sources, see Georg Luck, ed., *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

4. See esp. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

5. Fritz Graf, "Prayer in Magical and Religious Ritual," in Faraone and Obbink, *Magika Hiera,* 188–213, economically documents the correspondences. See also Sarah Iles Johnston, "Songs for the Ghosts: Magical Solutions to Deadly Problems," in Jordan, Montgomery, and Thomassen, *World of Ancient Magic,* 83–102, and David Frankfurter, "The Magic of Writing and the Writing of Magic: The Power of the Word in Egyptian and Greek Traditions," *Helios* 21 (1994): 189–221.

6. Gager, *Curse Tablets,* 24, urges the complete abandonment of magic as a separate category of analysis. For defense of the traditional dichotomy between religion and magic (grounded in the work of George Frazer), see Luck, *Arcana Mundi,* 4–9, and further bibliography in Graf, "Prayer in Magical and Religious Ritual," 207 nn. 3–4.

7. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* 2.

Roman "magic" and its antecedents in indigenous Egyptian tradition,[8] while other work has begun to examine the relationship between the magical and divinatory traditions of ancient Syria and Mesopotamia and those of the Graeco-Roman Near East.[9] The implications of this research reach far beyond the study of "magic" texts alone.[10] Thus, as conference organizers and editors, we were particularly interested in drawing attention to the wealth of new scholarship on "magic" in various fields of Near Eastern and Biblical Studies. Since the late 1970s, there has been a steady stream of new translations and synthetic analyses of the divinatory and astrological traditions of ancient Mesopotamia,[11]

8. Robert Kriech Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice,* Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 54 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993), 236–49; idem, "Egyptian Magical Practice Under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and Their Religious Context," in *ANRW* II 18.5 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 3333–79; David Frankfurter, "Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt and the Problem of the Category 'Magician,'" in Schäfer and Kippenberg, *Envisioning Magic,* 115–35. But cf. the reservations of Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* 5–8.

9. See already Franz Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* (Leipzig: Verlag und Druck von B. G. Teubner, 1925). For more recent works, see Erica Reiner, "Magic Figurines, Amulets, and Talismans," in A. E. Farkus, P. O. Harper, and E. B. Harrison, eds., *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds: Papers Presented in Honor of Edith Porada* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1987), 27–36; Christopher A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Greek Myth and Ritual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); idem, "The Mystodochus and the Dark-Eyed Maidens: Multi-Cultural Influences on a Late Hellenistic Incantation," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* 297–333; idem, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

10. Walter Burkert, "Itinerant Diviners and Magicians: A Neglected Element in Cultural Contacts," in Robin Hägg, ed., *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century B.C.*: Tradition and Innovation, Proceedings of the Second International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 1–5 June 1981 (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1983), 115–19, and Christopher A. Faraone, "Molten Wax, Spilt Wine, and Mutilated Animals: Sympathetic Magic in Near Eastern and Early Greek Oath Ceremonies," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993): 60–80, are model studies in this regard. See also M. J. Geller, "The Influence of Ancient Mesopotamia on Hellenistic Judaism," in Jack M. Sasson, ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), 1:43–54.

11. Studies on divination preceded those on magic by many years. See, e.g., Johannes Hunger, *Babylonische Tieromina nebst griechisch-römischen Parallelen,* Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft, 3 (Berlin: Wolf Peiser Verlag, 1909), and Georges Conteneau, *La divination chez les Assyriens et les Babyloniens* (Paris: Payot, 1940). For more recent works, beginning in the 1970s, see David H. Engelhard, "Hittite Magical Practices" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1970); Leonard William King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery: Being "The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand"* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975); Walter Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf! Mesopotamische Baby-Beschwörungen und Rituale* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989); Werner Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen,"* Studia Pohl, 5 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976); F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Babylonian Prophylactic Figures: The Ritual Texts* (Amsterdam: Free University Press); Graham Cunningham, *Deliver Me from Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations 2500–1500 BC* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio, 1997); Tzvi Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature* (Atlanta, Ga.: Brown Judaic Studies, 1987); Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn, eds., *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives,* Studies in Ancient Magic and Divination, 1 (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1999); Erica Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 85/4 (Independence Square [Philadelphia]: American Philosophical Society,

Egypt,[12] and Israel.[13] These path-breaking studies of Near Eastern religious traditions, however, have rarely enjoyed a distribution beyond major university libraries,[14] and their existence has often escaped notice even among scholars of Graeco-Roman magic. Our selection of essays for this volume, therefore, was

1995); Jean Bottéro, "Magie. A. In Mesopotamien," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 7 (1987–90): 200–234; Walter Farber, "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Mesopotamia," in Sasson, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East,* 3:1895–909; Scott B. Noegel, "Dreams and Dream Interpreters in Mesopotamia and in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)," in Gayatri Patnaik, ed., *Dreams and Dreaming: A Reader in Religion, Anthropology, History, and Psychology* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave-St. Martin's Press, 2001), 45–71.

12. Ritner, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice,* and Joachim F. Quack, "Kontinuität und Wandel in der spätägyptischen Magie," *SEL* 15 (1998): 77–94, both deeply undercut traditional assumptions about the "magical" tendencies of Egyptian religion. Paul Ghalioungui, *Medicine and Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963), Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), Eleanor L. Harris, *Ancient Egyptian Divination and Magic* (York Beach, Me.: Weiser, 1998), and Bob Brier, *Ancient Egyptian Magic* (New York: Morrow, 1999), are useful surveys for the nonspecialist. J. F. Bourghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), provides a critical foundation for all later studies. See also Robert Kriech Ritner, "The Religious, Social, and Legal Parameters of Traditional Egyptian Magic," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* 43–60.

13. Though see the now outmoded studies of T. Witton Davies, *Magic, Divination, and Demonology Among the Hebrews and Their Neighbors* (Ph.D. diss., University of Leipzig, 1897) (London: J. Clarke & Co. 1898; repr., New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969); Anton Jirku, *Die Dämonen und ihre Abwehr im Alten Testament* (Leibzig: A Deichert, 1912); idem, *Mantik in Altisrael* (Rostok: Rats- und Universitätsbuchdruckerei von Adlers Erben, 1913); and Alfred Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination Among the Hebrews and Other Semites* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938). For works beginning in the 1960s, see Otto Eissfeldt, "Wahrsagung im Alten Testament," in D. F. Wendel, ed., *La divination en Mésopotamie ancienne et dans les régions voisines,* XIVe Rencontre assyriologique internationale (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), 141–45; André Caquot, "La divinations l'ancien Israël," in André Caquot and M. Leibovici, eds., *La divination* (Paris: Presses Univeritaires de France, 1968), 83–113. An important work often overlooked in more recent studies is Michael Fishbane, "Studies in Biblical Magic: Origins, Uses, and Transformations of Terminology and Literary Form" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1971). See also Piera Arata Mantovani, "La magia nei testi preesilici dell'Antico Testamento," *Henoch* 3 (1981): 1–21; Christiano Grottanelli, "Specialisti del soprannaturale e potere nella Bibbia ebraica; appunti e spunti," in F. M. Fales and Christiano Grottanelli, eds., *Soprannaturale e potere nel mondo antico e nelle società tradizionali* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1985), 119–40; J. K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Divination and Magic in the Religion of Ancient Israel: A Study in Perspectives and Methodology" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1986); Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995); Meir Bar-Ilan, "Witches in the Bible and the Talmud," in Herbert W. Basser and Simcha Fishbane, eds., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism,* n.s., vol. 5 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993), 7–32; Robert Michael Braman, "The Problem of Magic in Ancient Israel" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1989); Josef Tropper, *Nekromantie: Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament,* Alter Orient und Altes Testament, 223 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989); Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation,* JSOTSup 142 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); Ann Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

14. With the possible exception of Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia,* and Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt.* Outside of academia, general readers have often had to resort to much earlier surveys, deeply flawed but still in print, such as E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic* (London, 1901; repr., New York:

guided in part by a desire to bring to a wider audience some of the best current work on divination and astrology from the fields of Egyptology, Assyriology, and Biblical Studies.

As we formulated our conception for this volume, we also were keenly aware of the burgeoning interest in astrology, divination, and other forms of "magic" among scholars of late antiquity. Despite the objections of many clerics (whether bishops, rabbis, or *ʿulamāʾ*), the sun, the moon, and the stars often retained their traditional association with divine power in the thought-world of late antiquity, and their movements remained the subject of extensive learned and also popular debate.[15] Various forms of divination—ranging from Christian versions of Graeco-Egyptian lot divination to talmudic strategies for dream interpretation—developed out of, and gradually transformed, ancient methods of ascertaining the will of the gods.[16] Followers of all three Abrahamic monotheisms continued to perform invocatory rituals inherited from the polytheist past, despite frequent de-

Dover Books, 1971); and Davies, *Magic, Divination, and Demonology Among the Hebrews and Their Neighbors.*

15. See esp. Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), and now K. von Stuckrad, "Jewish and Christian Astrology in Late Antiquity: A New Approach," *Numen* 47 (2000): 1–40. On the "magic of the heavens," see Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 87–126. For a brief overview, note Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 64–85.

16. For these particular examples, see Lucia Papini, "Fragments of the *Sortes Sanctorum* from the Shrine of St. Colluthus," in David Frankfurter, ed., *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 393–401; Peter Schäfer, "Jewish Magic Literature in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages," *JJS* 41 (1990): 75–91, esp. 88. William Klingshirn's forthcoming study of divination in late antiquity promises to elucidate further connections. On magic in early Judaism, see Gideon Brecher, *Das Transzendentale, Magie, und magische Heilertarten im Talmud* (Vienna: Klopf & Eurich, 1850); Samuel Daiches, *Babylonian Oil Magic in the Talmud and in the Later Jewish Literature* (London: Jews' College Publication, 1913); Jacob Neusner, "Rabbi and Magus in Third-Century Sassanian Babylonia," *History of Religions* 6 (1966): 169–78; Jens-Heinrich Niggemeyer, *Beschwörungsformeln aus dem "Buch der Geheimnisse" (Sefar ha-razîm): Zur Topologie der magischen Rede,* Judaistische Texte und Studien, 3 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975); James H. Charlesworth, "Jewish Astrology in the Talmud, Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Early Palestinian Synagogues," *HTR* 70 (1977): 183–200; Y. Avishur, "Darke ha-Emori: Ha rega ha-kena'ani-bavli we-ha-mivne ha-sifruti," in Chaim Rabin, D. Patterson, B. Z. Luria, and Yitzhak Avishur, eds., *Studies in the Bible and Hebrew Language Offered to Meir Wellenstein on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Jerusalem: Jewish Society for Bible Research in Israel, 1979), 17–47; J. N. Lightstone, "Magicians, Holy Men, and Rabbis: Patterns of the Sacred in Late Antique Judaism," in W. Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism,* vol. 1 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1985), 133–48; Daniel Sperber, *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1994); Giussepe Vertri, *Magie und Halakha* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1997); K. von Stuckrad, *Frömmigkeit und Wissenschaft: Astrologie in Tanach, Qumran, und frührabbinischer Literatur,* Europäische Hochschulschriften, 23; Theologie, 572 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1996); Michael D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). For the impact of Mesopotamian ideas on dream interpretation in rabbinic Judaism, see M. J. Geller, "The Survival of Babylonian Wissenschaft in Later Tradition," in Sanno Aro and

nunciations of these rituals as survivals of "paganism" or "idolatry."[17] As with the study of Graeco-Roman and Near Eastern magic, a spate of recent editions and translations has now made accessible substantial excerpts from the vast range of late antique "texts of ritual power."[18] The conceptual framework used to approach this material has also changed, as scholars have abandoned the conventional evolutionary schema (i.e., magic as a degenerate form of religion) and have focused increasingly on the sociological functions of the *accusation* of magic.[19]

R. M. Whiting, eds., *The Heirs of Assyria: Proceedings of the Opening Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project Held in Tvärminne, Finland, October 8–11, 1998,* Melammu Symposia, 1 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2000), 1–6; Scott B. Noegel, *Nocturnal Ciphers: The Allusive Language of Dreams in the Ancient Near East,* American Oriental Series (New Haven, Conn.: in press).

17. For western Europe, see in addition to Flint, *Rise of Magic,* Richard Kiekhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Kiekhefer, however, is less concerned with the specific legacies of Graeco-Roman magic. There is not yet a comparable study for the Orthodox Christian world, though Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Magic* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, distributed by Harvard University Press, 1995), contains several valuable essays; James Russel, "The Archaeological Context of Magic in the Early Byzantine Period" (in ibid., 35–50) is the most revealing for the legacy and transformation of earlier Graeco-Roman magic. For the legacy of polytheism among the diverse religious communities of late antique Mesopotamia, one may consult the vast literature on the Aramaic incantation bowls. See Rudolph Stübe, *Jüdisch-babylonische Zaubertexte* (Halle: J. Krause, 1895); James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1913); and the article by Michael Morony in this volume. For works that draw attention to the cosmopolitan context of the incantation bowls, see also I. Jeruzalmi, *Les coupes magiques araméennes de Mésopotamie* (Paris, 1964); Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts* (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1967); Christa Müller-Kessler and K. Kessler, "Spätbabylonische Gottheiten in spätantiken mandäischen Texts," *ZA* 89 (1989): 65–87; Tapani Harviainen, "Syncrestic and Confessional Features in the Mesopotamian Incantation Bowls," in *L'ancien Proche-Orient et les Indes: Parallelismes interculturels religieux* (Helsinki, 1993), 29–37; idem, "Pagan Incantations in Aramaic Magic Bowls," in M. J. Geller, J. C. Greenfield, and M. P. Weitzman, eds., *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53–60; Erica C. D. Hunter, "Incantation Bowls: A Mesopotamian Phenomenon?" *Or* 65 (1996): 220–33; Hannu Juusola, "Who Wrote the Syriac Incantation Bowls," *SO* 85 (1999): 75–92. On early Islam, see further below.

18. For the Christian tradition, see Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power,* Mythos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Philippe Gignoux, *Incantations magiques syriaques* (Louvain: E. Peeters, 1987). Major collections of Jewish texts can be found in W. S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967); Charles Isbell, *Corpus of Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975); Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1985); Lawrence H. Schiffman and Michael D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1,* Semitic Texts and Studies 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992). See also T. Schrire, *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966).

19. Concisely articulated at Gager, *Curse Tablets,* 25. For the emergence of this new thematic focus, see the influential essays of G. Poupon, "L'accusation de magie dans les actes apocryphes," in *Les actes apocryphes des apôtres: Christianisme et monde païen* (Geneva: Labor & Fides, 1981), 71–85, and esp. Peter Brown, "Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages," in Mary Douglas, ed., *Witchcraft, Confessions, and Accusations* (London: Tavistock, 1970), 17–45, reprinted in Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London: Faber & Faber; New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 119–46.

Increased dialogue with current scholarship on Graeco-Roman religion similarly has begun to reveal how much Christian conceptions of "magic" owed to Graeco-Roman antecedents but also where Christian ritual and theory diverged most fundamentally from the polytheist past.[20]

The study of magic in Arabic sources, and especially the relationship of those sources to earlier late antique or even ancient contexts, has been the topic of rigorous investigation since at least the mid-nineteenth century. Most of this work is philological in character, focusing on the editing and interpretation of key texts, but important advances have been made in constructing a general typology of magical practices and in tracing common etiological myths.[21] Perhaps the best-known Arabist studies of magic are the extant Arabic texts relating to the "Hermetic Corpus," focusing primarily on the *Tabula Smaragdina* and related alchemical traditions said to have been transmitted from Alexander the Great via Apollonius of Tyana.[22] Closely related to this is the so-called "Nabataean Cor-

20. Andrzej Wypustek, "Un aspect ignoré des persécutions des chrétiens dans l'antiquité: Les accusations de magie érotique imputées aux chrétiens aux IIe et IIIe siècles," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 42 (1999): 50–71, is excellent on the intersection between Christian and Graeco-Roman conceptions of magic. On demonology as the linchpin for Christian conceptions of magic, see Valerie Flint, "The Demonization of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinitions of Pagan Religions," in Ankarloo and Clark, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe,* 277–348, and the lucid observations of Robert Marcus, "Augustine on Magic: A Neglected Semiotic Theory," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 40 (1994): 375–88, on the affinities with Neoplatonist demonology. Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978; repr., New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993), was pivotal in opening this interdisciplinary dialogue.

21. For recent overviews, see Kornelius Hentschel, *Geister, Magier und Muslime: Dämonenwelt und Geisteraustreibung im Islam* (Munich: Diederichs, 1997), and Sylvain Matton, *La magie arabe traditionnelle* (Paris: Retz, 1977). Older, but still useful, are Edmond Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers: A. Jourdan, 1909); Alfred Ossian Haldar, *Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1945); and Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe* (Ph.D. thesis, Strasbourg, 1966) (Paris: Sindbad, 1987). See also the important collection of essays in Charles Burnett, *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Aldershot, Hampshire; Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1996).

22. For an outline of the textual corpus, see Martin Plessner, "Hirmis," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2d ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 3:463–65. See also Garth Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), and the English translation of the texts: *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermetica and the Latin Asclepius,* trans. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Also useful are the introductory materials in A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste,* 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie LeCoffre, 1949–54). For the transmission into Arabic, see A. Siggel, "Das Sendschreiben das Licht über das Verfahren des Hermes der Hermesse," *Der Islam* 24 (1937): 287–306. Several of the Arabic texts include etiologi-

pus." This corpus makes reference to a number of Arabic texts that purport to be translations of, or based upon, earlier "Nabataean" and other Hellenistic texts. Thus, for example, the corpus cites the Descent of Ishtar, known from more ancient Babylonian sources, and an account in which a *golem* (i.e., an artificial human) is created by a chief magician named Ankabutha.[23] In some accounts, this "Nabataean" knowledge is traced back to the contents of secret books bequeathed to the biblical figure Seth by his father Adam.[24] The Arabic materials linked to the Sabians of Harran also include magical texts and traditions from earlier periods. Prominent among these texts is the *Turba Philosophorum,* a diverse compilation that includes the *physica* and *mystica* of Democritus, a manual of talismanic astrology attributed to Hippocrates, and the prophecies of Baba the Harranian.[25] There are also vast fields of research on Arabic alchemy, divination, and the alphabetic and numerological sciences, which were understood as

cal legends explaining the chain of literary transmission; see, e.g., the *Fihrist* of Ibn Nadim and the *Kitab al-uluf* of Abu Maᶜshar, which is preserved in Ibn Juljul, *Tabaqat,* ed. Fu'ad Sayyid (Cairo, n.d.), and Saiᶜd al-Andalusi, *Tabaqat al-umam,* ed. Louis Cheikho (Cairo, 1950); see also the useful analysis by A. E. Affifi, "The Influence of Hermetic Literature in Muslim Thought," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950): 840–55. The account linking the text with Apollonius of Tyana can be found in the *Kitab dhakhirat al-Iskandar,* also called the al-Istimakhis (vademecum): see Plessner in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* (1925): 912–20. It is also found in Ursula Weisser, ed. and German trans., *Kitab sirr al-khaliqah* (Aleppo, 1979, and Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), a work attributed to Balinus (Apollonius of Tyana). An overview of the Emerald Tablet traditions can be found in the dated but still useful Julius Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina* (Heidelberg: C. Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1926).

23. See Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, "Ibn Waḥshiyya and Magic," *Anaquel de estudios árabes* 10 (1999): 39–48. For the work of Ibn Waḥšiyya, *al-Filaha al-Nabatiyyah* (Damascus, 1993), see the edition by Toufic Fahd, ed., *L'agriculture nabateénne: Traduction en arabe attribuée a Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ali al-Kasdani connu sous le nom d'Ibn Waḥshiyya (4/10e siècle)* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1993–98). A fuller overview of the literature and texts can be found in Theodor Noldeke, "Nabataische Landwirtschaft," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 29 (1876): 445–55, and Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums I* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967–), 4:318–29. A study of Waḥšiyya's text can be found in Martin Levey, *Medieval Arabic Toxicology: Book on Poisons by Ibn Waḥshiya and Its Relation to Early Indian and Greek Texts* (Philadelphia, 1966), and Bhristoph Burgel, "Die Suferweckung vom Scheintod," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften* 4 (1987–88): 175–94.

24. On the connection between these traditions and magic, see John C. Reeves, "*Manichaica Aramaica?* Adam and the Magical Deliverance of Seth," *JAOS* 119 (1999): 432–39.

25. On the *Turba Philosophorum,* see Julius Ruska, *Turba Philosophorum: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Alchemie* (Berlin: J. Springer, 1931). On the manual of talismanic astrology, see Abu al-Qasim Maslama b. Ahmad al-Majriti, *Ghayat al-hakim* (trans. into Latin as "Picatrix"), ed. Helmut Ritter (Berlin: Teubner, 1933); German trans. Helmut Ritter and Martin Plessner (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1962). See also the study by Ritter, "Picatrix: Ein arabisches Handbuch hellenistischer Magie," in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1921–22* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1923), 94–124. On the prophecies of Baba the Harranian, see Franz Rosenthal, "The Prophecies of Baba the Harranian," in W. B. Henning and E. Yarshater, eds., *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1962), 220–32.

having ancient origins by Muslim, and later European, scholars who translated and studied them.[26]

Only in recent years, however, have scholarly works on the magical traditions of the ancient world and late antiquity begun to engage the fundamental, and still evolving, debates about the study of religion and magic among sociologists, anthropologists, and scholars of comparative religion.[27] Some have attributed the lack of previous engagement to the legacy of Durkheim's argument that "magic" is to be distinguished from "religion" in that the structure and goal of magic is individual, not social.[28] Such an approach excludes certain practices and texts from analysis on the grounds that the so-called magical phenomena are not relevant to the understanding of religion and its social function. Other historians of religions adopt this stance to justify the study of magic as distinct from religion. Marcel Mauss's "General Theory of Magic" outlines the social structure represented by the magician and his clients and how this structure is represented in the social efficacy of certain magical rites.[29] Bronislaw Malinowski, in his study of the Trobriand islanders, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, in his ethnography of the Azande, have taken similar approaches.[30]

Many historians of religions have regarded magic simply as a type of religious practice and have tended to subsume magic and the phenomena associated with it under more ambiguous and undifferentiated categories such as "religious ex-

26. On the influence of "magic" in later Islamic thought, see H. F. Hamdani, "A Compendium of Ismaili Esoterics," *Islamic Culture* 2 (1937): 210–20; S. H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines;* Rudolf Strothmann, *Gnosis-Texte der Ismailiten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943); and some of the many works by Yves Marquet, such as "Révélation et vision véridique chez les Ikhwan al-Safa," *Revue des études islamiques* 32 (1964): 27–44. On the influence of Hermeticism on European thought, see Francis A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1964).

27. For a concise introduction to the many theoretical approaches that have been applied to magic, see Graham Cunningham, *Religion and Magic: Approaches and Theories* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

28. See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* trans. Joseph Swain (New York: Free Press, 1915), esp. 57–60 (originally published as *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* [Paris, 1912]). For the impact of earlier astrological sciences on Islamic sources, see also Keiji Yamamoto and Charles Burnett, eds., *Abû Maʿšar on Political Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties,* 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999).

29. See Marcel Mauss, "Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie," in *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950; repr., 1991). For an incisive critique of Mauss's approach to magic, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss," in ibid., ix-lii, trans. Felicity Baker, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss* (London: Routledge, 1987).

30. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* (New York: American Book Co., 1935; repr., 1978). An analysis of Malinowski's theory of magic can be found in S. F. Nadel, "Malinowski on Magic and Religion," in Raymond Firth, ed., *Man and Culture: An Evaluation of the Work of Bronislaw Malinowski* (London: Routledge, 1957), 189–208. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracle, and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937; repr., 1976).

perience" or "ritual."[31] Such is the case with the influential work of Mircea Eliade, which often draws heavily on examples of phenomena that other historians of religions would characterize as magic. In his work on alchemy and geomancy, for example, Eliade analyzes alchemy and related divinatory techniques as evidence for the widespread influence of rituals that link cosmogonic symbols with the imaginary center of the world.[32] In his works on Yoga and Shamanism too, Eliade similarly investigates individual connections to the sacred or divine. Yet, these connections clearly relate to the ancient Near Eastern divinatory, prophetic, and initiation practices that he chose to emphasize.[33] Thus, though influential, Eliade's application of models developed in Indian contexts to ancient Near Eastern materials has not always produced a more nuanced understanding of ancient magical practices. Similarly, his attempts to impose models developed from Near Eastern materials onto nonliterate cultures have not stood up to more recent critical analysis.[34]

The focus on magical practices as examples of divine experiences has enjoyed much attention in a number of disciplines. Early anthropologists, like Edward Tylor, speak of "primitive" forms of religion as "magic" insofar as they treat coincidence as a means of divine communication.[35] William James discusses religion as the objectification of unseen ideals and singles out a number of experiences that he labels "mystical." For James, these experiences correspond to perceived lapses in rational explanations for psychological experiences.[36] Some phenomenologists similarly subsume phenomena often associated with magic under their generic definition of religion. Gerardus Van der Leeuw, for example, contends that "power" is the object of religion and that the harnessing and objectification of power by man, experienced as the "sacred" through rituals such as sacrifice and divination, produces a variety of human religions. Later sociologists such as Joachim Wach and cultural anthropologists like Victor Turner also defined religion as the result of an experience, induced through various means, including those others might term "magical."[37]

In recent years a fresh approach to the study of magic has begun to emerge from within the history of religions. Rather than isolate "magic" as a peculiar phenomenon separate from religion or simply include "magic" as an undifferentiated aspect of religion, some historians of religions have attempted to explain magic as a distinct but integral component of religion.[38] In part, this move is informed by a recognition that many of the written and oral sources available to historians of religions appear to distinguish certain rituals, experiences, and beliefs as somehow set apart from other public, common, or unspecialized aspects of religion.[39] In some cases, the separation of magic from religion is polemical in character. Medievalists have helped to delineate how the cultivation of "magic" as a special set of knowledge and practices, and its relationship to Christianity and Judaism, was connected to important social and economic changes and to the increased attention to metaphysics and scientific thinking.[40] Others see magic as an important subset of larger religious practices and ideas. Thus, scholarship on Indian and East Asian religions has acknowledged the native use of "magic" as a logic of thinking in Vedic and Buddhist texts.[41]

31. See, e.g., Einar Thomassen, "Is Magic a Subclass of Ritual?" in Jordan, Montgomery, and Thomassen, *World of Ancient Magic,* 55–66.

32. See Mircea Eliade, *Cosmologie si alchimie babiloniana* (Bucharest, 1937), and his *Forge and the Crucible,* trans. Stephen Corrin (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

33. Eliade's interest in divinatory techniques, initiation rites, and their use in establishing a connection with the divine is most clearly expressed in his *Le yoga: Immortalité et liberté* (Paris: Payot, 1954), trans. Willard Trask, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), and his *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris: Payot, 1951), trans. Willard Trask, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

34. See, e.g., Jonathan Z. Smith's critique of the latter in his *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual,* Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. 13–21. In this respect, Eliade might be understood, as Smith understands him, as continuing and extending some of the Pan-Babylonianist models. See, e.g., Jonathan Z. Smith, "Mythos und Geschichte," in Hans Peter Duerr, ed., *Alcheringa oder die beginnende Zeit: Studien zu Mythologie, Schamanismus und Religion* (Frankfurt: Qumran, 1983), 19–48, esp. 35–41.

35. See Edward B. Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind,* 3d ed. (London, 1878), 129–31. See also Tylor, *Primitive Culture,* 2d ed., vol. 1 (New York, 1889), 115–16. On the background of Tylor's theories, see George W. Stocking Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), esp. 284–330. See also J. Samuel Preus, *Explaining Religion: Criticism and Theory from Bodin to Freud* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 131–56.

36. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902; repr., New York: Penguin, 1982). On James and the background to the study of religious experience, see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

37. Joachim Wach, *Types of Religious Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), esp. 209–27. Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), esp. 112–30. This approach of Wach's is evident but less so in his *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944). A useful but older overview of this perspective can be found in Raymond Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).

38. See, e.g., A. S. Kapelrud, "The Interrelationship Between Religion and Magic in Hittite Religion," *Numen* 6 (1959): 32–50; H. S. Vernsel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion," *Numen* 38 (1991): 177–97.

39. See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), esp. 59–76. There is also a useful summary of "magic" as a term in Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* 8–18.

40. See Amos Finkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: From the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

41. See Michael Witzel, *On Magical Thought in the Veda* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1979); Brian K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 34–39; Asko Parpola, "On the Symbol Concept of the Vedic Ritualists," in Haralds Biezais, ed., *Religious Symbols and Their Functions* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979), 139–53; Stan-

It is this recognition, that "magic" constitutes a native category of thought in a variety of cultures and traditions, that typifies the recent shift toward the study of magic in the history of religions. This shift gives new theoretical weight to the notion of "magic" as a reified category into which we might place certain practices and ideas. The purpose of this classification is not, however, the labeling of selected phenomena as "magical" in a pejorative sense or in a way that might exclude them from the rational, acknowledged aspects of religion. Rather, the aim of such scholarship is to determine the meaning and significance of terminology, practices, and concepts that are evident in the textual and ethnographic record. "Magic" thus is viewed, not as a category that historians of religions impose on their material, but rather as a relatively limited set of phenomena recognizable in that material.

The difference separating this more recent approach from that of earlier scholars like Mauss and Malinowski is remarkable not so much for its theoretical insights as for its methodology. Most of the essays in this volume avoid entanglement in the definition of magic and begin by trying to understand the internal logic of particular "magical" documents or artifacts. These essays thus attempt to uncover the explanation of particulars ensconced in specific cultural contexts. Nevertheless, by using the term "magic," this scholarship recognizes the inevitable need to translate and interpret those particulars into more generic terms. The result, therefore, is the beginnings of a far more nuanced and subtle understanding of "magic" as a generic category that is both part of the historical and ethnographic record and integral to theoretical conceptions of religion.

It is this background, then, coupled with our desire to make accessible the most recent scholarly advances in the study of ancient magic, that informs the thirteen essays in this volume. Like the conference that preceded it, *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars* deliberately collapses conventional disciplinary boundaries in its definition of the ancient and late antique world. Contributors to the volume include scholars from the fields of Assyriology, Egyptology, Classics, Jewish Studies, Early Christianity, Late Antiquity, and Early Islam; in geographical range, the essays cover material originating from at least eleven modern nations, stretching from western Iran to the central Mediterranean. What unites the essays is a common interest in methods of communication with the divine—various forms of divination,

ley Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man,* n.s., 3 (1968): 175–208; and idem, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Related to this is the important monograph of Richard Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshiping Siva in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Many of these ideas and interpretations can be found to have roots in the discussion by Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brahmanas,* Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études, science religieuses, 11 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1898).

exegesis, or rituals used to interpret, invoke, or obstruct the superhuman power(s) of the cosmos. Though many of these rituals have traditionally been placed under the rubric of "magic," others could just as easily be called religion. The inclusion of "prayer" in our title acknowledges the close connections between magic and more sanctioned forms of religious activity.

The "stars" of our title underlines another key theme: the intimate link between divinity and the celestial bodies throughout the ancient world and, to a lesser extent, in late antiquity. This fundamental aspect of ancient religion has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves, particularly in the fields of Classical Studies and Late Antiquity.[42] There has been more recognition of the prominence of the stars in Mesopotamian religion,[43] where the first cuneiform sign used to designate the word "god" appears in the image of a star. Yet even in Assyriology, and in Egyptology too, there is a need for more research.[44] By investigating the role of the heavenly bodies in both public and private religions, across time, and throughout the ancient Near East and Mediterranean worlds, the essays in this volume reveal both shared cross-cultural assumptions about the divine power of the celestial bodies and striking differences in how humankind read and appealed to those divine powers.

This background and our goals also inform the organization of this book, which consists of four parts. Part I, "Locating Magic," uniquely includes a single essay: "Here, There, and Anywhere," by Jonathan Z. Smith, one of the most prominent theorists in the comparative study of religion. Here Smith builds upon his earlier work by advancing a new typology for the study of religion in the ancient world and late antiquity.[45] His typology consists of three components: "(1) the 'here' of domestic religion, located primarily in the home and in burial sites; (2) the 'there' of public, civic, and state religions," usually centered on temples staffed by a spe-

42. Hence the enormous contribution of recent books like Tamsyn Barton's *Ancient Astrology,* which have highlighted the centrality of the celestial bodies in many aspects of Graeco-Roman thought and religion. See also Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars.* On Islam, see George Saliba, "The Role of the Astrologer in Medieval Islamic Society," *Bulletin d'études orientales: Science occultes et Islam* 44 (1992): 45–68.

43. Hermann Hunger, ed., *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1992); N. M. Swerdlow, ed., *Ancient Astronomy and Celestial Divination* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999). See also Hannes D. Galter and Bernhard Scholz, ed., *Die Rolle der Astronomie in den Kulturen Mesopotamiens; Beiträge zum 3. Grazer morgenländischen Symposium, 23.–27. September, 1991,* Grazer morgenländische Studien, 3 (Graz: Karl-Franzens Universität, 1993); David Pingree, "Legacies in Astronomy and Celestial Omens," in Stephanie Dalley, ed., *The Legacy of Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 125–38.

44. There is, for instance, relatively little discussion of the stars in Abusch and van der Toorn, *Mesopotamian Magic.*

45. Of the earlier work, see esp. Smith, *To Take Place,* and idem, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990).

cial class of literate priests; "and (3) the 'anywhere' of a rich diversity of religious formations that occupy an interstitial space between these other two loci, including a variety of religious entrepreneurs and ranging from groups we term 'associations' to activities we label 'magic.'" His topography of ancient religion provides a stimulating framework, one that insists on the comparative study of "magic" against the backdrop of broader changes in the political, economic, and cultural history of the ancient world. Smith points to the expansion and relative prominence of the religions of "anywhere," over against and sometimes at the expense of the persistence of the religions of "here" and "there," as one of the most significant developments of late antiquity.

Part II, "Prayer, Magic, and Ritual," contains four essays that reveal the rich diversity of approaches now being applied to the study of ancient magic. Ian Moyer's essay, "Thessalos of Tralles and Cultural Exchange," examines the epistolary prologue of the text on astrological botany attributed to the first-century Greek physician Thessalos of Tralles. The story of Thessalos's encounter with a native Egyptian priest in Thebes has stood at the center of many previous discussions of ancient magic. After a careful review of earlier interpretations, Moyer presents a novel reading of Thessalos's revelation as a product of cultural exchange through the medium of ritual. The contribution by Marvin Meyer ("The Prayer of Mary in the Magical Book of Mary and the Angels") addresses the much-contested taxonomy of prayer versus magic through the lens of a specific well-documented case study: a late antique prayer to the Virgin Mary preserved in Coptic, Ethiopic, and Arabic. Focusing on the Coptic version, Meyer demonstrates how a text like the Prayer of Mary in Bartos simultaneously belongs within traditions of both late antique "magic" and Coptic Christian piety. Gideon Bohak's essay, "Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere? Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae,*" addresses an important methodological question: how should scholars explain the often unintelligible and "powerful 'alien' words" that figure so prominently in the diverse magical texts of late antiquity. All too often, according to Bohak, scholars have posited a "Jewish" origin for particular *voces* on rather shaky philological grounds. Their learned etymologies may stem more from the authors' Judeocentric and Christocentric perspectives than from any disproportionate Jewish contribution to the magical idioms of late antiquity. The final essay of the section, Michael G. Morony's "Magic and Society in Late Sasanian Iraq," offers a general introduction to the "magic bowls" of southern Iraq and sketches an innovative and promising strategy to use the incantation bowls as documents for the social history of late antique Mesopotamia.

Part III, "Dreams and Divination," also composed of four essays, explores various strategies for communication with, or interpretation of, divine power. In "The Open Portal: Dreams and Divine Power in Pharaonic Egypt," Kasia Szpakowska uses the inscriptions of two New Kingdom officials and a contemporaneous dream-interpretation manual to document a significant development in ancient Egyptian divinatory conceptions. In particular, she reveals how nonroyal figures gradually gained hitherto restricted access to the gods by way of ritual dreaming. Moreover, she demonstrates how this shift from royal to nonroyal access may have been influenced by political and cultural changes affecting the Egyptian empire in the aftermath of foreign invasions. As Peter Struck demonstrates in his contribution, "Viscera and the Divine: Dreams as the Divinatory Bridge Between the Corporeal and the Incorporeal," a search for communion with the divine in the Graeco-Roman tradition often led believers to turn inward. Using evidence from Plato and the Hippocratic treatise *On Regimen,* Struck brings together the emphatically corporeal and the emphatically incorporeal regions of human existence. In particular, Struck investigates the tendency in ancient thought to link the viscera and the divine as reflected in many different forms of divination, even in what may seem to be the least corporeal of the divinatory arts, the practice of reading dreams. Jacco Dieleman's "Stars and the Egyptian Priesthood in the Graeco-Roman Period" presents another case study in the Greek world's fertile encounter with Egyptian culture. His analysis centers on a ritual text for astral divination whose importance lies in its use of two languages: Demotic (later Egyptian) for the ritual's technical instructions and Greek for conjuring the deity. As Dieleman shows, the terminology and procedures of this ritual reveal a complex and lively dialogue between tradition and innovation in late Egyptian religion. Michael D. Swartz's "Divination and Its Discontents: Finding and Questioning Meaning in Ancient and Medieval Judaism" turns our attention to the close connection between the hermeneutics of Jewish divination (a world that is "inherently semiotic") and methods of biblical exegesis. To demonstrate his argument, Swartz focuses on books of lot divination (*goralot*) whose worldview assumes that every detail of our environment has meaning and whose authors seek to reassure their readers of the sanctity of this hermeneutic. As he shows, these books register ambivalent attitudes toward divination by some rabbis in late antiquity and represent a well-established pattern common to many Jewish magic rituals in presenting their divinatory system as a substitute for the loss of specific Temple rituals.

Part IV, "The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars," moves appropriately *ad astra* to consider evolving ideas about the nature of the celestial bodies in the religions of the ancient world and late antiquity. Francesca Rochberg's "Heaven and Earth: Divine-Human Relations in Mesopotamian Celestial Divination" demonstrates how Mesopotamian legal, religious, and cosmological conceptions, which identify the gods with celestial bodies and assume a reciprocal correspondence between events in the heavens and those on earth, profoundly influenced the practice of

ancient Mesopotamian celestial divination. Rochberg also shows how the orderliness of the Mesopotamian cosmos hinged on the maintenance of reciprocal relations between heaven and earth. Thus, rulers, who needed to maintain order over their subjects on earth, had to observe through divination the omens in the heavens and to respond with the appropriate rituals to ward off the evil portended by some omens. As Rochberg illustrates, implicit in the practice of these rituals is the possibility that some procedure could persuade the gods to prevent the occurrence of the predicted event. Mark S. Smith, in "Astral Religion and the Representation of Divinity: The Cases of Ugarit and Judah," compares the conception of divinity in West Semitic religion, as revealed by tablets excavated at the late Bronze Age port of Ugarit in northern Syria, with that of Judah, as depicted in the Hebrew Bible. As Smith demonstrates, for much of their history the people of Ugarit imagined their divine pantheon as a heavenly version of the royal patriarchal household, but with strong connections to specific celestial bodies. Later, their conceptualization of divinity shifted to place the storm-god Baal at the pantheon's head, thus replacing the former chief god, El, and divorcing the pantheon from its long-held astral associations. Smith uses this model of change as an analogy to elucidate the emergence of Yahweh as the Israelite god and the subsequent eclipse of astral religion in Israel. He demonstrates, for example, how Israelites, by identifying Yahweh with El, retained a connection to astral deities in their attribution to Yahweh of a "host of heaven," but rejected most other celestial associations, especially when the Neo-Assyrian empire and its astral cults began to expand their influence. Thus, Smith provides a strong framework for understanding the Israelite conceptualization of Yahweh and his celestial associations. Nicola Denzey's essay, "A New Star on the Horizon: Astral Christologies and Stellar Debates in Early Christian Discourse," revisits the oft-cited scholarly assumption that early Christians rejected outright Graeco-Roman systems of astrology. Her point of departure is the textual evidence for a lively and impassioned debate in which Christians engaged both sides concerning the validity—not to mention the true significance—of astrology and astrological prognostication. At the center of the debate were various interpretations of the significance and hidden meaning of the "star of Bethlehem" in the Gospel of Matthew. By examining a variety of early Christian exegetical traditions about the star, Denzey demonstrates how early Christians attempted to interpret the history of the Church within the hermeneutical framework of Graeco-Roman astrology. The final essay of the volume, Radcliffe Edmonds's "At the Seizure of the Moon: The Absence of the Moon in the Mithras Liturgy," introduces us to a set of ritual instructions found in the Mithras Liturgy that were used to prepare "magicians" for encountering the supreme sun-god Mithras. In particular, Edmonds focuses on the text's instruction that the ritual preparations take place "at the seizure of the moon," that is, when the moon is new, or absent from the heavens. Edmonds shows that the significance of the moon's absence lies in its role in the genesis of souls, bringing them down from the upper realms into the world below. The moon also is absent from the experience of the "magician," as he ascends to encounter Mithras on the rays of the sun through the air, winds, and the planets. Indeed, as we learn, the absence of the moon is not an isolated ritual detail, but rather corresponds to a pattern found throughout the whole spell, in which the moon's absence is crucial to the magician's project of immortalization through his contact with the powers of the sun. Edmonds's analysis shows how the absence of the moon reveals the cosmology underlying this famous spell.

Thus we hope that this diverse collection of approaches and materials serves to suggest ways in which "magic" in the ancient world might be seen as a distinct but variegated phenomenon. These essays illustrate some of the various means by which ancients accessed the divine.

1

Here, There, and Anywhere

Jonathan Z. Smith

The editors of this volume have presented me with a double rhetorical task. According to their initial formulation, I was to write for both an interested public and for an international group of experts. The formulation of the general topic drew upon the specialized knowledge of nine academic units of the University of Washington. It contemplates a geographical range of more than two and a half million square miles of land, "from Iran and Mesopotamia in the East to Canaan, Egypt, and the Aegean in the West."[1] Concealed in these boundaries is the intense interactivity of these various cultures across the entire southern Eurasian continent: for example, Sumer and the Indus valley in trade relations in the third millennium (B.C.E.);[2] F. J. Teggert's calculation that, of the forty occasions of war in the western Roman empire, between 58 B.C.E. and 107 C.E., twenty-seven were directly traceable to changes in the commercial policy of the Han Chinese government.[3] The invitation projects a literate time-span of some 3,800 years as it considers religious phenomena within this broad region in their "Ancient, Classical and Late Antique forms." It defines "religion" comprehensively as the "manifold techniques, both communal and individual, by which men and women . . . sought to gain access to divine power." I would revise only the last

1. I cite here the formulations of the original conference document. The general assumptions parallel an important contemporary redescription of the ancient Mediterranean world as an interactive site of transformative contact as well as divisive conflict. See, e.g., the Melammu initiative of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project devoted to "the intellectual heritage of Babylonia and Assyria in East and West," in Sanno Aro and R. M. Whiting, eds., *The Heirs of Assyria: Proceedings of the Opening Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project Held in Tvärminne, Finland, October 8–11, 1998,* Melammu Symposia, l (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2000).

2. See, e.g., David Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity,* vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); E. C. L. During-Caspers, "Harappan Trade in the Arabian Gulf in the Third Millennium BC," *Mesopotamia* 7 (1972): 167–91; S. Ratnagar, *Encounters: The Westerly Trade of the Harappa Civilization* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981).

3. F. J. Teggart, *Rome and China: A Study of Correlations in Historical Events* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1939), vii-viii, et passim.

clause, substituting "sought to gain access to, or avoidance of, culturally imagined divine power by culturally patterned means."[4]

As the recent turn of the millennium has resulted in much celebratory rhetoric concerning the duration of one new late antique religion—one of five new late antique religions to continue into modern times[5]—it is worth recalling that our assigned region and time-span encompass a set of religious traditions most of which have had two- or three-millennia-old histories. To understand these phenomena is to think through the dynamics of religious persistence, reinterpretation, and change—to think through the ways in which a given group at a given time chose this or that mode of interpreting their traditions as they related themselves to their historical past and to their social and political present.

In fulfilling my assigned task, there are only two stratagems available to me, either to focus, in thick detail, on a particular instance as exemplary of the whole, or to generalize, recognizing that generalization falls between particularity and universality and, therefore, is always both partial and corrigible. In this presentation, I will take the latter tack, and I will do so in the form of a topography.

I have signaled this intent with my title, which I owe to Dr. Seuss's character Sam and his canonical rejection of green eggs and ham by means of a formula that recurs some half dozen times in the Seuss work with only a change of verb. To cite just one occurrence:

> I will not eat them here or there,
> I will not eat them anywhere.[6]

My confidence in this tripartite division of every place was strengthened when Dr. Seuss's doggerel brought to mind Robert Orsi's important 1991 article "The Center Out There, In Here, and Everywhere Else: The Nature of Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint Jude, 1929–1965." In this study, Orsi seeks to answer a quite particular question:

4. As is readily recognizable, I adapt here Melford Spiro's definition of religion as "an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings," specifying the interactions in terms of access and avoidance in keeping with the conference's announced theme. See Melford Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in M. Banton, ed., *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion,* Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth Monographs, 3 (London: Tavistock, 1966), 96.

5. I include as the five new late antique religions surviving to modern times Judaism, Samaritanism, Christianity, Mandaeanism, and, depending on how one dates the Iranian formations, the Parsis (as well as the Gabars).

6. Dr. Seuss, *Green Eggs and Ham* (New York: Random House, 1960), n.p. It is important to my topography that "anywhere" not be read as "everywhere."

> A peculiar anomaly has characterized the National Shrine of Saint Jude Thaddeus, patron saint of hopeless causes and lost causes, since its founding by . . . a Spanish order of missionaries in Chicago in 1929. On the one hand, Jude's shrine was seen by both the saint's devout and the clerical caretakers of the site as a specific and special place of power, desire and hope, which is how such locations have always been imagined in the Catholic tradition; on the other hand, the devout were never encouraged nor did they feel compelled to go to that place in order to secure the benefits they sought from the saint.[7]

Orsi proposes that the solution to this "spatial decentering" was the formation of a voluntary association, the League of Saint Jude, which communicated with the shrine by writing. Through this association a "center out there" was established and maintained by means of "writing as going." This transformed a local shrine into a national one. Equally important, this transformation shifted attention from a notion of space "as the primary focus of devotional life to time"—a late antique strategy I have explored at some length in *To Take Place.*[8]

In this essay I should like to propose a topography for this volume's expansive topic in terms of three spatial categories: (1) the "here" of domestic religion, located primarily in the home and in burial sites; (2) the "there" of public, civic, and state religions, largely based in temple constructions; and (3) the "anywhere" of a rich diversity of religious formations that occupy an interstitial space between these other two loci, including a variety of religious entrepreneurs, and ranging from groups we term "associations" to activities we label "magic."

While modes of access to and means of protection from imaginations of divine power differ in all three of these loci, I would locate one significant difference between the ancient/classical and late antique forms of the Mediterranean religions under review as being the expansion and relative prominence of the third locus (the religions of "anywhere") in late antiquity over against, and sometimes at the expense of, the persistence and transformations of the first two loci (the religions of "here" and "there").[9]

7. Robert Orsi, "The Center out There, in Here, and Everywhere Else: The Nature of Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint Jude, 1929–1965," *Journal of Social History* 25 (1991): 213–32.

8. Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual,* Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 86–95, et passim.

9. While the topographical strategy remains constant, I would not wish this scheme to be identified with the distinction "locative/utopian" developed, among other applications, to explore continuities, revaluations, and differences in archaic and late antique Mediterranean religions in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions,* Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, 23 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), xi-xv, 100–103, 130–42, 147–51, 160–66, 169–71, 185–89, 291–94, 308–9, as well as in subsequent publications.

1. "HERE": THE SPHERE OF DOMESTIC RELIGION

Considered globally, domestic religion is the most widespread form of religious activity; perhaps due to its very ubiquity, it is also the least studied. This is especially true of domestic religion of the past. Being largely nondramatic in nature, and largely oral in transmission, domestic religion does not present itself to us as marked off as "religious" in any forceful manner. Its artifacts, if any, are small-scale and often of common materials, resulting in what one scholar has termed an archaeology of clay rather than of gold. Such artifacts tend to fill up museum basements rather than display cases. While their interpretation remains insecure, I need only refer to the decades-old debate between scholars of ancient Mediterranean religions as to whether the common small clay nude female figurines associated with household sites are dolls for children or goddesses for ritual to make the point.[10] The domestic realm, "here," precisely because it is not "there," because it is not situated in separated sacred space, invites ambiguity as to significance. This ambiguity is only increased when such artifacts are assigned to the dubious place-holding category of "popular religion." For these reasons, one can only applaud important recent works, such as the study by Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel* (1996), that begin to redress the imbalance.[11]

Domestic religion, focused on an extended family, is supremely local. It is concerned with the endurance of the family as a social and biological entity, as a community, as well as with the relations of that community to its wider social and natural environs. While no doubt pressing the matter to an extreme, one thinks of Fustel's insistence that each family, in classical Greek and Roman tradition, constituted a separate "religion."[12]

While the parallel is remote from the cultures this volume treats, and therefore serves as an analogy, I have been most helped in imagining the category of domestic religion by Marcel Granet's portrait of a rural Chinese peasant household.[13]

10. For a summary of these debates, see P. J. Ucko, *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete with Comparative Material from the Prehistoric Near East and Mainland Greece,* Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper, 24 (London: A. Szmidla, 1968).

11. Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life,* Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East, 7 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

12. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study of the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1896), 41, 46–48, et passim. This usage is especially dominant in Fustel's description of the marriage rituals (pp. 53–60).

13. Marcel Granet, *La civilisation chinoise: La vie publique et la vie privée,* L'évolution de l'humanité: Synthèse historique, 25 (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1929), 205; idem, *La religion des Chinois,* 2d ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), 21–25.

Several feet below the ground is buried a receptacle containing the bones or relics of ancestors. Directly above this is a subterranean storage vessel containing next year's seed rice. Placed above this, on the surface of the ground, is the bed of the primary householder couple. These three loci interact through symmetrical relations of exchange. The power of the ancestors enlivens the seed rice and the conjugal bed. The rice feeds both the ancestors and the householders. The sexual activity of the husband and wife quickens the seed rice and the ancestors. There is no apparent distance to be overcome. Relations are intimate; their continuity is expressed in terms of circulation and exchange.

Although the idiom differs within and between the religions of the regions we have under review, an analogous set of symmetrical relations pertain. It is a continuity that remains as long as the familial community is itself maintained. Extinction is its most obvious threat—whether by war, disaster, disease, or demonic attack. While the religious avoidance of these general traumas remains primarily an affair of civic or national modes of religion, the presence in many domestic sites of small divine figurines with apotropaic inscriptions suggests similar concerns with avoidance within the sphere of household religion.[14]

For domestic religion, dislocation is another sort of threat bearing a similar religious value. While scholars have tended to focus their attention on the civic and national implications of exiles and diasporas, forced distance from hearth, home, and, especially, the familial burial site is a profound rupture of the presumed endless accessibility of the ancestors that stands at the heart of domestic religion. One needs only to recall the solemn oath Joseph made the Israelites in Egypt swear, "When God comes to you, you shall carry up my bones from here" (Gen. 50:25), and the narration of the fulfillment of that promise by Moses at the time of the Exodus from Egypt (Exod. 13:19), the bones finally being reburied at a familial site: "The bones of Joseph, which Israel had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground that Jacob bought . . . it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph" (Josh. 24:32). If, from the temple-centered perspective of the religions of "there," the dead constitute a pollution, interfering with sacred transactions, in the religions of "here," the dead are an indispensable medium for such transactions.[15]

Finally, to any list of threats to domestic continuity must be added the danger of forgetfulness; hence, the importance of formal and informal genealogies as well as family sagas. This latter threat raises, as well, a different set of poten-

14. See, e.g., the inscriptions cited in D. Rittig, *Assyrisch-babylonische Kleinplastik magischer Bedeutung vom 13.–6. Jh. v. Chr.* (Munich: Verlag Uni-Druck, 1977), 185–208.

15. For a suggestive attempt to account for the historical reasons for this shift in archaic and classical Greek religion, see I. Morris, "Attitudes Toward Death in Archaic Greece," *Classical Antiquity* 8 (1987): 296–320.

tial interruptions to the community and continuity of the family. As both Emile Durkheim and Arnold van Gennep already perceived,[16] these are the issues addressed by those life-crisis rituals surrounding birth, puberty, marriage, and death, with their attendant dilemma of increasing or decreasing the community. Such entrances and exits, such incorporations and dissolutions, require social/ritual markings and memorializations. While van Gennep's overreliance on the metaphor of "threshold" may require revision, for domestic religion the *limen* is central inasmuch as it highlights issues of external, rather than familial, relations. The threshold separates those who belong, or who are welcome through complex codes of hospitality, from those who are not. It separates those who are received by a host (in the sense of one who provides food) from those who are repelled by a host (in the sense of armed force). The central locus of this difference, expressed as inclusion or exclusion, and, therefore, the most elaborated form of the domestic religion of "here," is the familial meal, with its attendant ethos of commensality.

The meal might be routinely marked as "religious" by verbal formulae or through ritual business with food—although almost always these employ ordinary domestic utensils or common fire, and consist of small elaborations of quotidian acts of eating, drinking, cooking, serving, pouring—but its prime mode of domestic sacrality consists in acknowledging who is there, both the familial living and the familial dead. The latter present something of a paradox. It is, on the one hand, crucial that the dead remain in the sphere of the dead. Ghosts, the undead, the resurrected constitute, from this perspective, a threat to be protected against, while protecting them against others. On the other hand, it is equally crucial that there be controlled contact with the dead, that there be a continuity of relationship and appropriate modes of the dead's presence. Hence practices that range from memorializing the dead at meals to sharing food with the dead or eating with the dead, often at burial sites.[17] (In the latter case, there is archaeological evidence at selected sites for *refrigeria,* often by holes drilled in tombs or tomb-

16. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995), esp. 405; Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 41–165.

17. See my treatment of these themes in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity,* Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 14; and Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 122–32. There have been a number of important specialized studies of some of these themes, ranging from Jo Ann Scurlock, "Magical Means of Dealing with Ghosts in Ancient Mesopotamia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1988), to T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit,* Harvard Semitic Monographs 39 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989); Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 279–84, offers a set of subtle generalizations concerning the familial dead.

stones through which foodstuffs and drink could be introduced.)[18] The appropriate form of the presence of the dead is expressed, as well, in general categories such as "blessing," as well as in their oracular or intercessionary roles within familial settings.[19]

2. "THERE": THE SPHERE OF CIVIC AND NATIONAL RELIGION

It is possible to be briefer in describing the religion of "there," as this is what most of us think of first when we imagine ancient religion: the dominant deities and their attendant mythologies and liturgies; the impressive constructions associated with temple, court, and public square. Wherever one's domicile, these latter locales are someplace else, are "over there" in relation to one's homeplace. To some degree, access to such constructions is difficult, as expressed in the architectural language of walls and gates, of zones and nested interiors.[20]

The religion of "there" appears, cross-culturally, as the result of the co-occurrence of at least six elements, although causal priority cannot be ascribed to any one member of the nexus: urbanism, sacred kingship, temple, hereditary priesthood (as well as other religious specialists often organized as craft guilds),

18. The starting point for any analysis remains André Parrot, *Le "refrigerium" dans l'au delà* (Paris: Librairie E. Leroux, 1937). See further *CAD* A/2, 324, s.v. *arûtu.* For a rare Greek example, see Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion: 1, Die Religion Griechenlands bis auf die griechische Weltherrschaft,* Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, 5. Abt., 2. Teil (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1976), 177 and n. 1. For these traditions in late antiquity, see, among others, G. F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer, 1985), 172, s.v. "meal for the dead," and compare the use of Snyder in Smith, *Drudgery Divine,* 129–32. For later, North African Christian *refrigeria,* largely associated with martyria, see J. Quasten, "*Vetus Superstitio et Nova Religio:* The Problem of Refrigerium in the Ancient Church of North Africa," *HTR* 33 (1940): 253–66.

19. The oracular materials are often subsumed under the broader category of necromancy (a term of enormous fluidity, as, for example, in Josef Tropper, *Nekromantie: Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und Alten Testament,* Alter Orient und Altes Testament, 223 [Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989]). See, among others, the significant recent studies by I. L. Finkel, "Necromancy in Ancient Mesopotamia," *AfO* 29–30 (1983–84): 1–17; Karel van der Toorn, "The Nature of the Biblical Teraphim in the Light of the Cuneiform Evidence," *CBQ* 52 (1990): 203–22; B. B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition,* Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 11 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994). See also the shrewd comments on oracular dreams of the dead in a Melanesian context in Kenelm Burridge, *Mambu: A Study of Melanesian Cargo Movements and Their Social and Ideological Background* (London: Methuen, 1960), 252–53; idem, *Tangu Traditions: A Study of the Way of Life, Mythology, and Developing Experience of a New Guinea People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 164–66.

20. Smith, *To Take Place,* 48–73. Compare the recent remarkable work by S. M. Olyan, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

sacrifice, and writing.[21] As this list suggests, the religion of "there" has to do primarily with relations of power. These relations are expressed, religiously, through modes of replication and rectification, characteristically employing the dual idioms of sacred/profane, pure/impure, permitted/forbidden.[22] Skill in the strategic deployment of these relations requires complex specialized knowledge (rather than largely oral, familial knowledge), as well as the mastery of intricate modes of interpretation ranging from the technologies of divination to the devices of casuistry.[23]

Central to these "imperial" religious formations is a principle first enunciated by the so-called Pan-Babylonian school, who understood their early reading of cuneiform texts to reveal a worldview dominated by the equivalence "as above, so below."[24] Rather than the immediate and symmetrical reciprocities of the religion of "here," the religion of "there" postulates a distance between the realm of the gods and the human realm. This distance is a relative one. Unlike today's all-but-infinite cosmos, the ancient calculation of distance was a matter of hundreds of feet (the distance at which the smoke of sacrifice disappears from view). Nevertheless, this distance was mediated by structures such as kingship and temple, in which the "above" served, ideologically, as a template for the "below," in which a variety of human activities served to bring the "below" ever closer to the "above" through ritual works of repetition and, when breaches occurred, through ritual works of rectification.

This essentially imperial cosmology is concerned with defending both the center and the periphery. These are frequently first established as the result of a cosmogony through combat in which a new king of the gods overthrows the previous king, thereby gaining the right to reorganize the world according to his like. (Note that, despite many scholars' formulations, this is a movement not from chaos to order but rather from a previous system of order to a new system of order.) Typically, parts of the predecessor's cosmos are recycled and re-placed in the new order, thus introducing a potentially destabilizing element if the new order is not scrupulously maintained. (Another mode of destabilization is the possibility, inherent in royal combat, of a new challenger.) Following the victory and coronation of the king of the gods, through an essentially bureaucratic taxonomy, the various parts of the cosmos, both celestial and terrestrial, are assigned their stations, have their roles and honors established, their names pronounced, their powers placed, and their destinies fixed.[25] For human activity to be successful in achieving replication and rectification, the intricacies of this order must be known—a knowledge that implies both an initial difficulty of discovery and an evidence, once discovered, that is celebrated in genres ranging from wisdom texts to omens, from law-codes to mythic and historical narratives. In each of these kinds of texts, individually acquired insight is rendered into public discourse through the mediation of precedent.

Rather than commensality among an extended family with ordinary foodstuff, the central ritual of the religion of "there" is the sacrifice, a meal among unequals, often coded in complex hierarchies (as, for example, in the division of the corpse and the distribution of the meat), with at least one, usually sacerdotal, figure serving not as the presence but rather as the representative of the god(s), with concern for transporting the meat (itself not a usual item of diet) to the divine realm, which is "over there."[26] Sacrifice is primarily food for the god(s), but it becomes, as well, linked with complex systems of sacred/profane, purity/

21. This complex has been best adumbrated by Paul Wheatley's work on "urban genesis," especially *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1971). See further the bibliography of Wheatley in Smith, *To Take Place,* 149 n. 16, as well as my comments on Wheatley, 50–54.

22. These three systems, while often parallel, ought not to be confused, as they are in the classic work by Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

23. See Smith, *Map Is Not Territory,* 70–72; idem, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown,* Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 48–49.

24. On the Pan-Babylonian school, see Smith, *Imagining Religion,* 23–29; idem, "Mythos und Geschichte," in Hans Peter Duerr, ed., *Alcheringa oder die beginnende Zeit: Studien zu Mythologie, Schamanismus und Religion* (Frankfurt: Qumran, 1983), 36–41.

25. This summarizes both the Divine Combat Myth and the Kingship in Heaven Myth, which are widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean. See, among others, C. Scott Littleton, "The 'Kingship in Heaven' Theme," in Jaan Puhvel, ed., *Myth and Law Among the Indo-Europeans* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 83–121; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); B. F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992); H. R. Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of Its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature,* VTSup, 65 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

26. I draw here on Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 32, and his valuable contrast between games and rituals: "Games thus appear to have a disjunctive effect. . . . Ritual, on the other hand, is the exact reverse; it conjoins, for it brings about a union (one might even say communion in this context) or in any case an organic relation between two initially separate groups. . . . [In ritual] there is an asymmetry which is postulated in advance between profane and sacred, faithful and officiating, dead and living, initiated and uninitiated, etc." Compare the view of sacrifice as communication in Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 97–98. I have presented an account of sacrifice in Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Domestication of Sacrifice," in R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, ed., *Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation: Conversations Between W. Burkert, R. Girard, and J. Z. Smith* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 278–304. On the division of meat, see both Marcel Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice," in Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, eds., *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 13, and J.-L. Durand, "Greek Animals: Toward a Topology of Edible Bodies," in ibid., 87–118.

impurity, permitted/forbidden. As such, sacrificial praxis invites learned exegesis and complex systematics unthinkable apart from writing. While I do not share the implications they draw, I commend the observation of some scholars that sacrifice is "as much a textual enterprise as one of actual practice; the sacrifice system begins to develop a level of significance independent, though not inseparable, from cultic practice."[27]

3. The Religion of "Anywhere"

At times more closely related to the familial model characteristic of the religions of "here," at other times closer to the imperial model characteristic of the religions of "there," there is a third pattern of religion, which takes many forms but has in common the element that it is tied to no particular place. It is, in the strict sense, "neither here nor there." It can be anywhere. In archaic or classical formations, religions of "anywhere" include religious clubs and other forms of associations, entrepreneurial religious figures (often depicted as wandering), and religious practitioners not officially recognized by centers of power.[28] In many cases, to use an old sociological distinction, they are associations or figures of status, but not of rank. What they offer are means of access to, or avoidance of, modes of culturally imagined divine power not encompassed by the religions of "here" and "there." At times they may imitate, at other times they may reverse, aspects of these two other dominant forms of religion.

What has interested me for much of my scholarly career is the fact that, throughout the Mediterranean world, in the period of late antiquity, these religions of "anywhere" rise to relative prominence, although the religions of "here" and "there" continue, often in revised forms.[29] Much energy by several generations of scholars has been devoted to accounting for this change.[30] While the explanations have been highly variegated, reflecting, no doubt, that we are treating with a multicausal phenomenon, I would lift out three elements as especially relevant to our theme: a new geography, a new cosmography, and a new polity.

27. G. A. Anderson, "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings," in *ABD* 5:873. For a similar perception of what Anderson calls "sacrifice as a textual phenomenon," see Hubert and Mauss, *Sacrifice*, 16.
28. See, e.g., Walter Burkert, "Craft Versus Sect: The Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreans," in B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders, eds., *Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World*, Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, 3 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 1–22.
29. See note 9 above.
30. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 143.

1. First, the New Geography

While there were experiments in imperialisms from Sumer on, and dislocations due to invasions or colonizations, there is a difference in disruptive scale resulting from the newer imperialisms ranging from the Persian and Macedonian to the Roman. An anthology of texts could be gathered that expresses both the positive and negative evaluations of displacement, of being a citizen of no place. But if, as for many, the extended family, the homeplace, as well as the burial place of the honored dead are no longer coextensive *topoi*, then the religion of "here" has been detached from its roots.

In such a situation, the religion of "here" must be transmuted in such a way as to overcome this dislocation. One solution will be sociological, the association as a socially constructed replacement for the family.[31] The other solution will be mythological. In these traditions dislocation is cosmologized by a new, vertical myth that overlies the horizontal reality (much as in Philo, where the terrestrial migrations of the Israelitic ancestors have been revalued as celestial ascents). In some forms, humans are depicted as dispersed, as exiled from their heavenly home, as having been mis-placed into bodies. Through death, or by undergoing rituals that are deathlike, individuals may ascend, back, to their true home, "on high," thus overcoming distance. Locale, having been dis-placed, is now re-placed.[32] These transformations give comparative advantage to religions of "anywhere."

2. Second, the New Cosmography

While not without elaboration, the archaic two-story cosmos (above/below) or three-story (above/earth/underworld) cosmos allowed for points of mediation between strata imagined as being relatively adjacent. Communication was largely unimpeded.[33] Each realm could have the other always in its sight. (Hence, archaic

31. See the important collection of studies in J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson, eds., *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 1996), and the brilliant overview of the state of the question by R. S. Ascough, *What Are They Saying About the Formation of Pauline Churches?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998).
32. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, xii-xv, et passim.
33. The issue of the communication between the realms as well as the dilemma of the blockage of communication between the upper and lower worlds has led to J. Rudhardt's important revisionary understanding of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* in "À propos de 1'hymne homérique à Déméter," *Museum Helveticum* 35 (1978): 1–17, now available in a slightly abridged English translation in H. P. Foley, ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 198–211. See a1so J. S. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus: Form*

structures such as covenant). Each displayed its appropriate order to the other, an order that was to be affirmed and replicated, an order that could be rectified if breached. The cosmos, as the Greek implies (Gk. *kosmos,* lit. "order"), was essentially good and beautiful because its elements were in their appropriate place. These were the essential presuppositions for the religions of "there."[34]

The new late antique cosmography, articulated from Eudoxus (390–340 B.C.E.) to Ptolemy (fl. 127–48 C.E.), proposed a far different picture. The earth was now conceived as a sphere, surrounded by the circular orbits of other planetary spheres, which either comprised or were transcended by divine realms.[35] In a common literary topos, the view back from the vast expanse of celestial space rendered the earth small; the human activities on its surface were seen as minuscule, as insignificant.[36] As the planets revolved around the earth, they spent much of their time period out of sight. We can't see them; they can't see us. What are they up to? Do they know what we're up to? How is the elevation of the food of sacrifice possible with such a remote and movable target? (The dilemma is not unlike that of the Houston Space Center which can fire a rocket only when there is a "window of opportunity.") Transcendence of earth, both as an experience and as a source of knowledge, becomes a goal—giving comparative advantage to a religion of "anywhere." (It is important, in the understanding of these traditions and their transcendental horizon, not to substitute the notion of "everywhere" for that of "anywhere.")

To give but one example: It is one thing to observe the movements of the heavenly bodies and discern from them knowledge both of the regularities of the cosmos and of the destinies of terrestrial affairs, the collection of which remains, especially in the vast Mesopotamian omen series, one of the chief intellectual achievements associated with the religions of "there." It is quite another matter to claim experience of having ascended to the stars or through the planetary spheres, and to assert one's kinship with them, in order either to obtain celestial knowledge directly or to press past them to reach even higher realms and even more hidden divine knowledge.

and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 202–66, esp. 208–13, 219, 220–21, 256–57, 260–66.

34. Compare the essay by Jean Bottéro, "The Religious System," in *Mesopotamia,* 201–31, esp. 218–31.

35. See, among others, Martin P. Nilsson, "The New Conception of the Universe in Late Greek Paganism," *Eranos* 44 (1946): 20–27; cf. idem, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion: 2, Die hellenistische und römische Zeit,* 4th ed., Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, 5. Abt., 2. Teil (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 702–11; idem, *Greek Piety* (New York: Norton, 1969), 96–103.

36. See the treatment of this topos in E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety,* The Wiles Lectures, 1963 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 7–8.

3. Third, the New Polity

The creation of new political ideologies, post-Alexander (356–323 B.C.E.), are the result of the total cessation of native kingship.[37] The unique, mediating role of the king was one of the foundations of the religion of "there." His removal from the scene was decentering. In some late antique traditions, the old forms of kingship became idealized objects of nostalgia, as in messianism. At the same time, archaic combat myths were re-visioned as resistance myths to foreign kings, resulting in new religious formations such as apocalypticism and millenarianism.[38] Other traditions appear to have pressed the logic of archaic sacred kingship even further. If the king was the image of the deity, and if the wrong king, that is to say, the foreign or illegitimate king, now sat on the throne, then there must be a wrong, or counterfeit, king of the gods on high, a concomitant variation explored in gnosticizing reinterpretations of archaic traditions.[39]

The new mode of kingship, post-Alexander, was not only foreign, it was remote. Positively, as Eric Petersen has suggested, the model of the distant emperor, mediated by satraps, governors, or vassal kings, played a significant role in the elaboration of the new formations of monotheism, along with the king-god's ubiquitous attendant subordinate and secondary divinities, principalities, and powers.[40] All of these actors were capable of being readily assimilated to the new, expanded cosmography. Similarly, there could be claimed experiences of celestial journeys to, or the receipt of messages from, the true king of the gods, who was above, or antagonistic to, the king-god of this world.[41]

In illustrating the effects of these three new elements, I have largely confined myself to examples from the mythological response to the new geography, cosmog-

37. See, in general, S. K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334–31 B.C.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), a pioneering work on the consequences of the cessation of native kingship.

38. On these themes, see Smith, *Map Is Not Territory,* 67–87. For the Egyptian materials there cited, see now the superb treatment by D. Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity,* Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 159–238.

39. I have persistently maintained that rather than thinking of "gnosticism" as a separate religious entity, it should be viewed as a structural possibility within religious traditions, analogous to categories such as mysticism or asceticism, and needs to be seen in relation to exegetical, reinterpretative practices. The wrong-king/wrong-god element discussed in the text should be compared to M. A. Williams's category of "biblical demiurgical" in his important work *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 51–53, et passim.

40. E. Petersen, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum* (Leipzig: Hegner, 1935).

41. Cf. Forsyth, *Old Enemy.*

raphy, and polity. Let me turn, now, to the social, with respect to two formations, one of which, while common, does not appear to figure largely in this volume, that of associations. The other, which is discussed at length elsewhere in this collection, is magic. In so doing, I will highlight reconfigurations and reinterpretations of elements characteristic of the religions of "here" and "there."

Associations, as religions of "anywhere," may be understood primarily as replacements of the religion of "here" in modes appropriate to the new world order. They do so, at least in part, by adapting elements more characteristic of the religions of "there." Responding to the experience of dislocation, they provide a new, predominantly urban, social location. Some were formed first as immigrant societies, initially retaining strong bonds to the homeplace. Others associate around divine figures, gods and goddesses, usually, but not exclusively, of the sort more characteristic of the civic and state religions of "there." The archaic domestic preoccupation with familial relations of inclusion/exclusion is here translated into a concern for boundaries that enclose a restricted and tested membership. While entire households may join such a club, the primary relations are between individuals as members of a fictive kin group, addressing one another as "brother" and "sister." This apparent egalitarianism stands in notable contrast to the hierarchical ordering of members, bearing an often bewildering diversity of titles, some of which echo those in the highly organized bureaucracy of the religions of "there."[42] Kinship is forged by rituals of acceptance, of initiation and expulsion, as well as legalistically by the formal acceptance of rules, the taking of oaths, the paying of dues. In this sense, group identity is not genealogical, but, rather, contractual. Indeed, some groups are chartered by the state; all are subject, at least in principle, to government regulation.[43]

The meal shared by these "brothers" and "sisters" continues to be the prime repetitive ritual for expressing their relations, now undertaken in the setting of a privately owned cult place or burial site, at times with hieratic practices that reflect priestly concerns characteristic of the religions of "there" (as, for example, in the Pharisaic *havurah*).[44]

In some associations, rather than forgetfulness representing a threat to the maintenance of the community, disclosure now menaces the group. Secrecy, with respect to those outside, has become an important value.

42. See Th. Schmeller, *Hierarchie und Egalität: Eine sozial-geschichtliche Untersuchung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine,* Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 162 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995).

43. See the literature cited in note 31 above.

44. Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 83–90.

Finally, I should note that these associations have the potential of working at cross-purposes to the older conceptualizations of family in the religions of "here," as when differing memberships divide genealogical siblings while, at the same time, establishing new, intimate relations and loyalties among their socially created fellow "brothers" and "sisters."

I have written elsewhere on the problematics of magic, and shall, therefore, not rehearse that here.[45] For the purposes of this essay, it is sufficient only to note that late antique magic, often conceptualized as a religion of "anywhere," represents, among other things, a fascinating and creative combination and re-formation of elements characteristic of both the religion of "here" and of "there." Like the religion of "here," its prime space is domestic, its rituals are small-scale. It may seek relations with the dead, or with exceedingly local divinities. But, just as frequently, it treats with the sorts of deities more commonly associated with the religions of "there." In either case, it does so in the insistent idiom of oracle and sacrifice. Finally, as is characteristic of the religions of "there," magic is a learned profession, presupposing both written texts and complex techniques for their interpretation.[46]

From another perspective, however, late antique magic is primarily a religion of "anywhere." As is the case with associations, it deploys ritual distinctions, especially initiations, with a highly developed sense of inclusion/exclusion. As with associations, its greatest threat is the divulging of its secrets.[47] As is characteristic of religions of "anywhere," it places great value on direct experience of transcendent beings, both as a demonstration of power and as a means of gaining esoteric knowledge.

In the vast panorama of religions this volume encompasses, it is possible to propose a final taxonomic generalization, one that depends on contrastive worldviews and their attendant soteriologies. We may distinguish between religions of "sanctification," which celebrate the present ordered world, having as their goal its maintenance and repair, and religions of "salvation," which seek to escape the structures and strictures of this world through activities having as their goal a con-

45. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory,* 172–89; idem, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," in *ANRW* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 16.1:425–39; idem, "Trading Places," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 129 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 13–27.

46. Hans Dieter Betz, "The Formation of Authoritative Tradition in the Greek Magical Papyri," in Meyer and Sanders, *Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World,* 161–70.

47. See, among others, Hans Dieter Betz, "Secrecy in the Greek Magical Papyri," in Hans G. Kippenberg and G. G. Stroumsa, eds., *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions,* Numen Book Series, 65 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 153–75.

stant working towards transcendence. While perhaps having an apparent affinity with one or the other, the religions of "here," "there," and "anywhere," have been adapted to either worldview. The contestations, permutations, and combinations generated by these two ethoi, whether within or between any particular tradition, constitute what we take to be the history of religions.

PART II

PRAYER, MAGIC, AND RITUAL