

Magic in the Ancient Greco-Roman World

Terms and Definitions

Etic approach

intuitive - magic and pornography

analytical

substantivist - what, where/when

functionalist - who, how, why

Emic approach

self-definition - active magic

other definition - accusations

positive and negative definitions of magic

descriptive and normative definitions

Theories and Principles of Magic:

The Grand Dichotomies - relation of magic to religion and science

Frazerian criteria:

Intention - concrete individual goals vs. intangible long-term goals

Attitude - manipulative/coercive vs. submissive

Action - impersonal action vs. personal interaction

Social Evaluation - anti-social vs. cohesive

Weberian criteria of legitimacy:

performance

political-social location

objectivity

ends

Edmonds:

Magic is a discourse pertaining to non-normative ritualized activity, in which the deviation from the norm is most often marked in terms of the perceived *efficacy* of the act, the familiarity of the *performance* within the cultural tradition, the *ends* for which the act is performed, or the *social location* of the performer.

Scholarship:

Hermann Usener (1834-1905)

Albrecht Dieterich (1866-1908)

Richard Wünsch (1869-1915)

Karl Preisendanz (1883-1968)

James George Frazer (1854-1938)

The Golden Bough (1890, 1912-5)

Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942)

Emil Durkheim (1858-1917)

Marcel Mauss (1872-1950)

Stanley J. Tambiah (1929-2014)

Personal Interaction: Prayer vs. Compulsion

Impersonal Action – *mana* or *dynamis*

Principle of Sympathy

law of similarity (homeopathy)

law of contagion (contact)

The Power of Words – **metaphor** and **metonym**

Performative Language

persuasive vs. predictive analogy
 instrumental vs. symbolic action
 empirical vs. non-empirical ends
 causality vs. participation
 verification vs. validity

Terminology:

<u>Greek</u>		<u>Roman</u>	
<i>magos</i>	<i>epaoide</i>	magus	veneficium
<i>mageia</i>	<i>pharmakon</i>	magica	veneficus
<i>agurtes</i>	<i>pharmakeus</i>	carmen	haruspex
<i>mantis</i>	<i>pharmakis</i>	cantio	defixio
<i>goes</i>	<i>telete</i>	excantare	devotio
<i>goetia</i>	<i>katadesmos</i>	incantare	

isopsephia

α 1	β 2	γ 3	δ 4	ε 5
ς 6	ζ 7	η 8	θ 9	ι 10
κ 20	λ 30	μ 40	ν 50	ξ 60
ο 70	π 80	ρ 90	ρ 100	σ 200
τ 300	υ 400	φ 500	χ 600	ψ 700
ω 800	ϗ 900			

$$\alpha\beta\rho\alpha\sigma\alpha\xi = 1 + 2 + 100 + 1 + 200 + 1 + 60 = 365$$



Questions for discussion

- 1- What – what is the magical ritual or object
- 2 - Where – where or when does the ritual take place? where is the object used?
- 3 - Who – who is performing the ritual, using the magical thing?
- 4 - Why – what is the motivation for the use of magic? what does the practitioner hope to achieve?
- 5 - How – how does the effect work? what is the source of the power? by what means does it operate? difference between perspective of practitioner and modern analyst?