

Magic and Social Tension

Esther Eidinow

To work off one's wrath on any apology for an enemy is expletive, that is, cathartic.¹



1 Introduction: The Terminology of “Magic”

This essay explores the relationship between “magic” and social tension in ancient society in terms of two aspects: i) magical practices by individuals, and ii) *accusations* of magical practice among individuals.² This distinction is drawn from anthropological studies of the role of magic: initial work that explored the emotional significance of magical practice for the individual, followed by explorations of magic in terms of its symbolic and functional role within a community, as a system of belief and accountability.³ This essay will

1 R.R. Marett, “From Spell to Prayer” in *Folk-Lore* 15 (1904); Reprint, *The Threshold of Religion*, 1st ed. (London: 1909), 44.

2 In line with the practice of this volume, I use the term “magic” etically in this essay, that is, as a neutral descriptive term to indicate types of ritual practice that seem to share certain characteristics (for a description of “emic” and “etic” approaches to discussions of magic, see E. Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk Among the Ancient Greeks* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 13–14). I aim to avoid the terms “sorcery” or “witchcraft,” since the distinction between them made in E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937 [1976]), 9–10, cannot be maintained across different anthropological or historiographical contexts; but I will use these terms where they are contextually appropriate, for example, when referring to a specific scholarly analysis. However, even in these cases (as I will explain) my understanding is that no strong distinction between the two terms is intended. All this said, the difference to which Evans-Pritchard originally alluded may still be of interest to Classical scholarship, as a prompt to consider the emergence of conscious and unconscious forms of supernatural harm achieved by ordinary mortals; see further A. Alvar Nuño, “Ocular Pathologies and the Evil Eye in the Early Roman Principate” *Numen* 59.4 (2012): 295–321, for example, on the evil eye.

3 The idea that the performance of certain ritual practices is related to an individual or group’s emotional state can be attributed to the anthropologist Robert Marett, who, in an essay

examine how scholars of the ancient world have focused on these different aspects of magic in order to try to understand individual and group emotional dynamics, and vice versa. The difficulties of reaching these insights are manifold: our own cultural values and assumptions (for example, about the reasoning of “common-sense,” the nature of rational behavior or what is “obvious,” and/or the power of previous interpretations) naturally frame our accounts of the evidence: our role is as much creative as elucidatory. With that in mind, the two aspects of magic and social tension under discussion here can also be understood in terms of “discourses of magic,” since, while they may vary in terms of specifics, they offer two distinct and recognizable authoritative explanations of systematic and powerful ideas, which embody an (often implicit) set of understandings of social roles and relations.⁴ In an attempt to illuminate, and occasionally question, these discourses, the ancient evidence is discussed here with reference to comparative material, drawn from work on other historical periods and, in particular, from anthropological studies. This essay will focus largely on aggressive magical practices, specifically relating to “curse tablets,” treating this as a broad category that includes a number of different types of ritual expression, but will also consider in passing other magical activities, including, for example, the creation of spells to elicit protection, such as amulets.⁵

published in 1904, moved the study of magic away from earlier intellectualist approaches (most famously, E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1871) and J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: a Study in Magic and Religion. Part 1 The magic art and the evolution of kings* (London: Macmillan, 1900)) by suggesting that such practices gave their user encouragement or relief. Other scholars developed these insights: see, for example, B. Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, vol. 2 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935) and Malinowski, “Magic, Science and Religion,” in *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1948; reprint, London: Souvenir, 1982), 79. Ideas about magic’s role in the emotional dynamics of the wider community were crucially developed in the examination of magic among the Azande in E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic*. Since then, the study of magic and its relation to social dynamics has blossomed across disciplines, offering important insights into the social and emotional lives of those who practice, or accuse others of practicing, magic (R.W. Shirley and A.K. Romney, “Love Magic and Socialization Anxiety: A Cross-Cultural Study,” *American Anthropologist* 64.5, part 1 (1962): 1028–31).

4 The term “discourse” has a complex meaning: I am using it here to indicate authoritative academic explanatory accounts. By powerful, I mean the capacity to have an effect—that is, on how the ancient world is understood, in shaping the discursive framework within which further academic analysis takes place; see S. Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2006).

5 On the broad category of curse tablets, and its constituents, as well as the different elements of these spells, including, e.g., *charaktères*, see above, Chapter 15.

Let me start with two brief, and no doubt familiar, examples to illustrate the two aspects of magic and social tension discussed in this essay. First, a vivid account of an accusation of aggressive magic is found in the trial of the philosopher and writer, Apuleius of Madaurus. Some time in the consular year 158–159 CE, in the city of Sabratha in North Africa, Apuleius was taken to court by the relatives of his new wife Pudentilla's dead ex-husband. The exact nature of the legal charge is difficult to define, since we only have Apuleius' self-defence, but most scholars take it that he was tried under (some aspect of) the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficiis*, most likely that which dealt with the creation or possession of, or trading in, poison/drugs.⁶ Apuleius refers to the charge as the "slandorous charge of *magia*" (*calumniā magiae*), and, defends himself against a number of specific accusations of magical practice, culminating in the charge that he had bewitched the widow Pudentilla in order to persuade her to marry him.

The speech is well known for the insights it gives into provincial Roman society, the formation of relationships, and how and why they might break down. For example, the trial itself is a display of the kinds of rivalries and suspicions that could spring up in an ancient community, and it suggests the kinds of social configurations that might exacerbate them. The content of the accusations made against Apuleius reveals the types of anxieties that, it was generally believed, might provoke a man to attempt to bewitch a woman. That the plaintiffs chose to accuse Apuleius of *magia* also suggests that there was some level of concern about ritual practice in that community. In turn, Apuleius' response—that the practice of *magia* is quite distinct from his philosophical learning, that the governor of Africa, Claudius Maximus, simply will not make the same mistake as his ignorant accusers⁷—illuminates the tensions that might exist in Roman society, between the sophisticated centre and the provinces, between social classes, between foreigner and native. The speech reveals a delicate but deadly game of (re)definitions, as the meaning and significance of the idea of "magic" is batted back and forth between opponents. This kind of discourse can reveal for us how a variety of social

6 F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. F. Philip (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 66; V. Hunink, *Apuleius of Madauros: Pro se de Magia (Apologia)*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: E.J. Brill, 1997), 1.13; R. Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic" in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 263; M.W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 147; but see J. Rives, "Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime" *Classical Antiquity* 22, no. 2 (2003): 322–28, on the development of the *Lex Cornelia* from dealing with deaths caused by magical means to general malevolent magical practice.

7 Apuleius, *Apology*, 1.3, 49–51, 53–56.

dynamics—suspicion, hostility, power—might express and shape communal understanding of the nature and content of deviant behavior.⁸

Although Apuleius seems to suggest that magic was the last thing a cultured man (like him) would practice, the material evidence exposes his position as a rhetorical strategy. For insights into the ancient practice of magic, we turn to a very different kind of evidence: the so-called “Louvre Doll,” which dates to the third or fourth century CE. There is a related text, as we will see, which can help us to understand something of the motivations behind the creation of such an object. Nevertheless, the object alone evokes a vivid story, offering a glimpse of the kind of magic that Apuleius and/or his contemporaries may have practiced. The Louvre Doll is a female figurine of unbaked clay resting on her knees. She appears to be hog-tied, her ankles drawn up to her buttocks, her hands bound low behind her back. She has been pierced 13 times: the needles poke out of the top of her head, both eye sockets, both ears, her mouth, the center of her breast and her pubis, her wrists, her ankles and both her feet. The doll was originally placed in a clay pot, and buried, along with a lead tablet containing a text that is 28 lines long. It calls on the gods of the underworld, the restless dead, and the spirit of a dead man, Antinous, to help the writer, Sarapammon, obtain the woman he wants.⁹

For modern viewers, this doll brings to mind a complex, cross-cultural cacophony of rather disturbing associations including sado-masochistic sex, pornography, black magic, and/or “voodoo.” In terms of the social dynamics it evokes, it is hard for us to see this pinioned figure and accompanying text as anything other than a man’s expression of pointed hatred and violence towards a woman.¹⁰ In fact, the doll turns out to be an interpretation of “a marvelous

8 Rives, “Magic in Roman Law,” 325–27.

9 Whether this is Antinous, companion to Hadrian, or another Antinous is debated, see M.W. Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)” *ANRW* 18.5 (1995), 3416. See above, Wilburn, chapter 18.

10 Scholars have been equally fascinated and repelled by the question of the meaning of this statuette, its spell, and the kind of society that created it. Their studies cover many different dimensions of this question: some have simply tried to fit this kind of practice within a single neat definition, arguing that such rituals as the *PGM* describes (private, coercive) clearly fit a criterion of “magical” deviance. See, for example, Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 229–32, who argues that magical ritual proffers “intentional inversions of everyday practices or ordinary ritual”, and S.I. Johnston’s argument against this in “Sacrifice in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, RGRW 141, ed. P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), 347 n. 7. Others have questioned what we mean by magic, arguing that these spells come from a tradition of Egyptian temple ritual (D. Frankfurter, “Dynamics of Ritual Expertise in Antiquity and Beyond: Toward a New Taxonomy of “Magicians,” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, 159–78). Others have tried to trace the cultural influences apparent in the spell itself, some opting for a

binding spell" (an *agoge*), in the Greek Magical Papyri (*PGM*), and a number of variations, based on it, have been found.¹¹ *Agogai*, often called "love spells," were intended to compel the erotic attention of one individual towards another; the *PGM* contains many examples. Sarapammon's doll is a useful, if shocking, reminder that in looking for the social dynamics that created the context of magical practice or accusation, we cannot simply assume that ancient men and women thought and/or acted as we do. It also introduces us to the, apparently widespread and long-running practice of binding-spells—and to our first example of an activity that seems to link magic and social tension.

2 Discourse A: Magical Practice and the Individual

2.1 *When and Where: Contexts, Motivations, and Assumptions*

In recent scholarship on the practice of ancient magic, the corpus of curse tablets has become an increasingly popular subject of study. The texts are usually grouped into five categories that describe the context in which each is assumed to have been written: judicial, erotic, theatrical/performance, commercial, and "border area" curses.¹² The first four of these categories are thought to comprise spells that express the anxieties provoked by the dynamics of competition (discussed further below); their aim appears to be to disable potential rivals in these different civic contexts.¹³ The "border area" curses—so-called because of their textual peculiarities rather than any liminal civic context—include aspects of both binding spells and prayers for justice, the latter a distinctive form of address to the gods also found inscribed on lead tablets.¹⁴ "Border area" curses, although they may use the idiom of binding,

purely Egyptian ritual (R.K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations 54 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 113). Still others suggest a more complex cultural heritage, involving Greek, Semitic as well as Egyptian features (C. Faraone, "The Ethnic Origins of a Roman-Era *Philtrokatadesmos* (*PGM* IV 296–434)," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, 319 and 343).

11 *PGM* IV 296–434.

12 See this volume, above, Chapter 15. C. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. D. Obbink and C. Faraone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3–32.

13 C. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," 11: The spells are assumed to "refer to agonistic relationships, that is, relationships between rival tradesmen, lovers, litigants or athletes concerned with the outcome of some future event."

14 Identified by H.S. Versnel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Between Magic—Religion", *Numen* 38 (1991): 177–97, updated in Versnel, "Prayers for Justice, East and West: New Finds and Publications since 1990" in *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from*

explicitly justify their requests to the gods by complaining about the activities/character of their victims, and how this drove them to take action; their overt concern is justice/revenge.¹⁵

At first sight, these categories might seem to offer modern scholars an uncomplicated index of the contexts in which the ancients practiced magic—and, thus, a straightforward insight into the social tensions that provoked them. However, it is important to realize the difficulties of applying these categories cleanly. For example, it is not always clear to which category a curse belongs; moreover, the context for which a curse was composed does not necessarily tell us the reasons *why* it was composed. With many of the tablets it is hard enough to attempt the former, before even starting on the latter. As an example, consider *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae* (DTA) no. 97 (found in a tomb of uncertain location in the Peiraeus, and dated to the third century BCE), which repeats the following formula:

I have seized [NAME], and bound their hands, and feet and tongues and souls; and if they are in any way about to utter a harsh or evil word about Philon, or do something bad, may their tongues and souls become lead and may they be unable to speak or act; but rather stab their tongue; and if they have anything, or are about to have anything, whether possessions or property or business, make it lost, stripped away and destroyed, and let them be destroyed for them ...

Here is a text that includes an instruction to prevent a target from speaking or acting, so could be included in the category of “judicial” on those grounds.¹⁶ However, it also mentions the possessions, and property or business of the target, so it could be classified under the category “commercial.” When, in turn, we consider the circumstances and motivation of its composition, the text may indicate a situation of rivalry, where the writer (Philon?) is concerned to silence a rival speaker, or the need to ruin a business competitor; but it is also

the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30th Sept.–1st Oct. 2005, ed. R. Gordon and M. Simon, RGRW 168 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), 275–354.

15 This category of texts, along with relevant scholarship, is further discussed in chapter 15, below.

16 Binding spells that target the tongues of their victims are often described as having been written for a judicial context, partly because of the widespread evidence that the tongue was a target for binding rival speakers (D. Ogden, “Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, vol. 2, 27; CTBS, 116–150; but other explanations are also possible: see for example, E. Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death: Women on Trial in Classical Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 239–40.

possible that the tablet was written out of a strong sense of enmity rooted in another context altogether, which prompted the writer to desire that his victims be broken in every aspect of their lives.

These difficulties become compounded when these categories become the basis for a theory of motivation that attempts to account for the practice of binding in general. The agonistic theory, put forward by Christopher Faraone and subscribed to by numerous scholars, is compelling. It argues that the writers of these tablets were the rivals of their victims in the contexts indicated by the categories, and wrote these spells in an attempt to quash the competition. This theory works well for some individual binding spells in the pre-Imperial period, but particularly for the spells against rival sportsmen, which start to appear in the Imperial period.¹⁷ For example, a spell inscribed on a lead tablet from Oxyrhynchos, dating to the third (or fourth) century CE, which aims at a number of foot-racers (*dromeis*) reads:

bind down the sinews, the limbs, the mind, the wits, the intellect, the three hundred and sixty-five limbs and sinews of ..., whom Taeias bore, and of Aphous, whom Taeis bore, and company, foot-racing athletes, so that they cannot run (?), nor have strength, but let them be sleepless through the entire night and let them throw up all food to their distress and ... of them, so that they do not have the strength to run, but let them come in behind, let them come in behind (?) ...¹⁸

In this case, there is little doubt about what the agent of this curse wished to achieve and it is not hard to imagine the circumstances in which it was written.

Nevertheless, it is still possible to find texts that blur these simple classifications: compare these extracts from another curse from Egypt (Alexandria) dated to the second or third century CE:

May Annianos lose his own power of recollection, and let him remember Ionikos only ... possess for me, Ionikos, the strength and might of Annianos, so that you seize him and deliver him to the untimely dead,

¹⁷ See, as examples, SGD 24–35, and, as examples of the binding of charioteers, *defixiones* against charioteers from Apamea published in W. van Rengen, “Deux défixions contre les Bleus à Apamée (VI^eme siècle ap. J.-C.)” in *Apamée de Syrie. Actes du colloque tenu à Bruxelles les 29, 30, 31 mai 1980*, ed. J. Balty (Paris: 1984), 213–234.

¹⁸ Translation: *Suppl. Mag.* 2, no. 53.

so that you melt his flesh, sinews, limbs, soul, so that he not be able to proceed against Ionikos and neither hear nor see any evil to my disadvantage, moreover prostrate under my feet until he is defeated ...¹⁹

Various reasons why Ionikos cursed Annianos have been put forward: one commentator suggested that Ionikos had cursed Annianos because he feared him; another, that the curse might be a love charm; another, that the curse was more likely written in a judicial context.²⁰ More recently, an ingenious solution describes the spell as comprising formulae drawn from a range of spell types combined to suit specific circumstances.²¹ The following scenario is suggested: that Ionikos feared legal action (l. 24) while himself planning to prosecute Annianos. He used formulae from the erotic *defixiones* “to disarm and mollify Annianos with feelings of love for a false friend,” rendering him a powerless opponent in a court-case involving goods that Ionikos acquired from Annianos. The spell is intended to “establish or re-establish a relationship between Annianos as *erastes* and Ionikos as unyielding *eromenos*.” If so, then this text reveals a variety of motivations, working across a range of contexts, using diverse spell types, and is a useful illustration of what appears to be an increasing specialization in the mode of spell writing.

Moreover, it may be an impression arising from particular patterns of survival in the material evidence, but it appears that there were trends over time and place in the focus of spells. These can be traced even in the earlier evidence for binding spells: for example, Attica has produced the largest number of spells written for a judicial context, most of which seem to date to the classical period;²² until the fourth century BCE, love curses (with one exception) seem to have been concerned with separating lovers rather than bringing them

19 Ll. 9–10, 20–26. See details and translation *Suppl. Mag.* 2, no. 54; *DTA* 38, 3.3: 50–52, included in category “*Causa defixionis obscura*,” 473.

20 Love charm: P. Moraux, “Une défixion judiciaire au Musée d’Istanbul,” *Mémoires Académie Royale de Belgique*, vol. 54, pt. 2 (Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1960), 48, n. 1 and *SGD*, 223, n. 16; Judicial: see K. Preisendanz, “Fluchtafel (Defixion),” *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 8 (1972): col. 13, f.; for summary, see *Suppl. Mag.* 2, no. 54.

21 *Suppl. Mag.* 2, no. 54.

22 Dating this material is difficult, and many of the tablets dated to the third century BCE in Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae* were redated in A. Wilhelm, “Über die Zeit einiger attischer Fluchtafeln,” *Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Instituts in Wien* 7 (1904): 105–26 to the fourth century BCE; see discussion R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131, n. 65. Jaime Curbera tells me that *Inscriptiones Graecae* is preparing a new edition of Wünsch’s collection of tablets, edited by Sergio Giannobile, David Jordan and Jaime Curbera.

together;²³ and, as mentioned above, curses against rival sportsmen cluster in the Imperial period.²⁴ Alongside these apparent trends in the context of spell-writing, the material record reveals the development of spells with increasingly specific social aims, and an overlap in the underlying intent of two categories of magic: spells, used to influence others, and amulets, designed to protect their wearers.²⁵ Thus, we find spells and recipes for spells that are, for example, intended to restrain the anger of others (*thumokatocha*), which are also combined with charms intended to further smooth the social relationships of the charm-wearer, either by restraining, or winning a victory over, opponents or by increasing the wearer's personal charisma or reputation.²⁶ In turn, the aims of such amulet/spell types may be inverted and transposed into aggressive magic: for example, spells intended to make their target the enemy of another.²⁷ If spell-types provide an indication of the emotional dynamics behind the spell, then we are dealing with a situation of more complexity than can be described by evoking any single dynamic, such as competition. It does not make sense to argue that the appearance of such spells signals the start date of particular emotional experiences. It seems more likely that the explanation will be found

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- 23 The exception is the love spell of one Pausanias, from Akanthos in Macedonia; see discussion in D.R. Jordan, "Three Curse Tablets," in *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4–8 May 1997*, ed. Jordan, H. Montgomery, and E. Thomassen (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999), 115–24 and Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 457.
- 24 Faraone, "Agonistic Context," 11, has argued that when Pelops prays to Poseidon in Pindar's *Olympian* 1, ll. 75–78, he is invoking a binding curse. However, Pelops uses a verb, *πεδᾶω*, which does not appear as a verb of binding in the corpus of curse tablets.
- 25 J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1990), 77–79. Such amulets are found more frequently in the formulae than in applied magic, it has been suggested they have a Near Eastern origin in the Neo-Assyrian *egalkura* spells (intended to increase the favour of one's superior), see C. Faraone, "Aphrodite's ΚΕΣΤΟΣ and Apples for Atalanta: Aphrodisiacs in Early Greek Myth and Ritual," *Phoenix* 44, no. 3 (1990): 219–43.
- 26 Spells to restrain anger: *Suppl. Mag.* 2, nos. 57 (SGD 162), and 79, ll. 19–25 (intended to restrain anger). See discussion in C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1950), 103–6. Numerous *thumokatocha* are found in the *PGM*, see *Suppl. Mag.*, 2, 35 for examples. Combined spells: *Suppl. Mag.* 2, no. 54 (discussed above); no. 58 (a victory charm or *niketika* also intended to restrain anger against its owner), and a recipe for success, favour, victory and the restraint of the anger of superiors: *PGM* XII.270–3 and 277–80. Such spells were not only intended for mortal influence: *PGM* VIII.923–25 asks for victory, strength and influence and is intended to be hung on a ship or horse, see also VII.390–3. For these and further examples, see Faraone, "Aphrodite's ΚΕΣΤΟΣ," 225.
- 27 *DTA*, 208 (CTBS, 216): a possible development of "separation" curses—usually categorized with "erotic" binding spells.

in considering the changing nature of cultural attention to evolving social relations. For example, rather than asking, when love rivalry began, so prompting the use of curse tablets, we might ask instead, when and why in particular communities did the *idea* of a love rival *begin to matter in such a way* that the use of binding spells seemed appropriate?²⁸

This consideration of the possible changes in motivations for using binding spells recalls the questions raised by Stanley Tambiah about Malinowski's theory that magic was a way of alleviating anxieties when technical knowledge was lacking. As Tambiah points out, the use of magic in relation to Trobriand yam gardening could not be explained simply by a lack of expertise. Rather it seemed to be more adequately explained by the value attributed to yams and yam gardening among Trobriand society. Tambiah suggested in response that if we are to try to account for a society's rituals then we have to "relate that society's rituals and ceremonials to its anticipation and anxieties in the realization of social values rather than to insufficiencies presented by raw nature or by technology."²⁹ One attempt to do this has been to explore the spell texts and the context of their creation in the framework of the social construction of risk, as formulated by Mary Douglas.³⁰ This approach suggests that groups select some dangers from among others for particular attention as "risks," for reasons that make sense according to their shared, and evolving, cultural values and concerns. Rather than seeking to provide an answer to the question of motivation, this theoretical framework emphasises the importance of analysing our evidence in terms of the culture that produced it. This is essential: it is clear that ancient spell texts, over time and place, provide insights into a range of contexts and the nexus of widespread anxieties that arose from the

28 For example, although binding-spells were being written in the sixth-fifth centuries BCE, the earliest of the erotic *agoge* spells seems to date only to the fourth century BCE. Ogden, "Binding Spells," 35 has attempted to resolve this problem using the prevailing theory of competition, suggesting that at first "the binding idiom did not seem immediately useful for situations of love, and it was indeed the rather specific erotic circumstance of the presence of a rival (real or feigned) for the beloved's affections, an 'enemy' in love, that first brought curse tablets into the erotic sphere." See discussion of erotic curses in Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 210–28.

29 Stanley J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 72.

30 See Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*: drawing on the idea of the social construction of risk, developed by Mary Douglas in M. Douglas, *Risk Acceptability According to the Social Sciences* (London: Russell Sage Foundation, 1986), Douglas, *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1992), and Douglas and A. Wildavsky, *Risk and Culture* (London: University of California Press, 1982).

(changing) demands of what Winkler calls “the wary game of life.”³¹ In order to understand them, we must attempt to place these ritual practices in context—not only that of the particular individual, but also of his or her community, and wider socio-cultural situation—and, as this suggests, we must be prepared to explore how both context and practices may have evolved over time.

The difficulties that beset such a task can be illustrated by examining the representation of the larger relationship between gender and love-magic as portrayed in ancient evidence, and then interpreted in modern scholarship. For example, for a long time it was accepted that the erotic spells of the papyri and lead tablets were largely written by men against women, in contrast to the literary representations of practitioners as predominantly female.³² These views have since been challenged by a number of scholars.³³ The evidence suggests that, on the one hand, “There is no evidence of an assumption on the part of non-imaginative male writers that erotic magic was the special preserve of women and that it was only practiced by love-lorn females,” and, on the other hand, that the formularies were adapted for use by both genders, for use against both genders.³⁴

We also need to be aware of our own assumptions. An attempt to make sense of the apparent contradictions of ancient literary and documentary evidence may underpin recent interpretations of (aggressive) spell-working by women. For example, Faraone has approached the question of gender and magical practice by arguing that men and women used different kinds of spells: the practice of erotic magic was primarily a male activity, its violence normalized within this culture. Male practitioners were motivated by the urge for sexual conquest, or the desire for a profitable marriage: their use of aggressive magic was part of their male identity.³⁵ In turn, he argues, “one special group of

31 Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*, 79.

32 J. Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” in *Magika Hiera*, 227–8; supported by Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 185–86, and C. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 43 n. 9.

33 Especially M.W. Dickie, “Who Practised Love-Magic in Classical Antiquity and in the Late Roman World?,” *Classical Quarterly* 50.2 (2000): 563–83, who challenges the findings for both literary and documentary evidence. Gager (CTBS, 80–81), and Ogden, “Binding Spells,” 63–67, suggest a revision of the evidence from the spells; see also E. Pachoumi, “The Erotic and Separation spells of the Magical Papyri and Defixiones,” *GRBS* 53 (2013): 294–352. Faraone, *Love Magic*, 83–84, finds problems with the depiction of a “standardized lovesick performer or client”; he argues that the curses are not therapeutic but likely to increase the self-confidence of the agent.

34 See Dickie, “Who Practised,” 580, for quotation and 566 for discussion of gender in the formularies.

35 Faraone, *Love Magic*, 84–95, 122–24.

women regularly co-opted these traditionally male forms of magic: courtesans and prostitutes.”³⁶ This analysis has been challenged by Dickie, but, as I have noted elsewhere, his criticisms nevertheless offer some implicit support for Faraone’s approach, since he assumes that the female agents of curses must be involved in commercial sexual activities.³⁷ In fact, women who were not sex-workers may well also have written such texts: for example, if they found their economic or emotional security threatened by a rival.³⁸ While interpretations that divide society and the anxieties of its members along gender lines may offer clear(er) explanations, they risk eliding more complex social dynamics.³⁹ Some examination of the possible motivations and cultural assumptions of the writers of the literary evidence, or consideration of the historical realities of daily life for ancient women in different parts of society, may instead help to produce a more nuanced understanding of the social tensions expressed in and by the use of love spells.

In conclusion, we can see how, as with other disciplines, evidence for ancient ritual practices may be used to provide historians with insights into the emotional lives and social concerns of ancient men and women, and to trace

36 Faraone, *Love Magic*, 149. Although arguing that women in the Hellenistic period had the freedom to practice attraction magic, and that the gender distinction between types of spells is hard to maintain, Dickie (“Who practised,” esp. 571) still assumes that the majority of curse writers are prostitutes motivated by economic demands.

37 Dickie, “Who Practised,” esp. 565; see Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 212–13.

38 See Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 210–228, for this argument about the social context in which women might write spells in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, followed by D. Frankfurter, “The Social Context of Women’s Erotic Magic in Antiquity,” in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*, ed. K. Stratton and D. Kalleres (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 319–39, concerning women writing spells in the Roman period.

39 See A.Y. Reed, “Gendering Heavenly Secrets? Women, Angels, and the Problem of Misogyny and Magic” in *Daughters of Hecate*, 108–51 and K. Stratton, “Interrogating the Magic-Gender Connection,” *Daughters of Hecate*, 1–37 on the stereotypes connecting women with (ancient) magic. In analyses of witchcraft in other times and places, work that examines the gendered preconceptions of scholars as well as those of their historical subjects in various ways includes L. Apps and A. Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*. (Manchester University Press, 2003), who argue for the feminization of male witches; see also M. Gaskill, “Masculinity and Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe*, ed. A. Rowlands (Basingstoke, Macmillan UK, 2009), 172. Others have argued for a distinct male “other,” e.g., E. Labouvie, “Men in Witchcraft Trials: Towards a Social Anthropology of ‘Male’ Understandings of Magic and Witchcraft,” in *Gender in Early Modern German History*, ed. U. Rublack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 49–70; A. Rowlands, “Not the ‘Usual Suspects’? Male Witches, Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe,” in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, 1–30.

possible areas of social tension—be they political, erotic, or related to other circumstances—between individuals and within communities. The difficulties of tracking down such ephemeral experiences are, however, manifold. This is partly a matter of the kind of evidence we have: without the possibility of fieldwork, our interpretations of individual and group motivations must rely on textual and material analysis, paying close attention to content, form and idiom. As may already have become apparent, one way to look for relevant evidence is to establish models of particular kinds of tensions (for example, competition against rivals) and then to try to trace these models across different kinds of evidence. This is a productive approach, but brings its own risks: for example, it is easy to overlook the emotional messiness of daily life, and the possibility that different kinds of social tensions may overlap and interact. It is possible to depend too closely on our own cultural assumptions and biases, closing down the possibility that the experience of social tensions in the ancient world may have been different from what we expect in both kind and quality, so that we overlook alternative analyses of the evidence. One helpful approach may be to draw on comparative material from other historical periods and other cultures, working, for example, with anthropological studies that may widen and deepen our understanding of both magic and social tension, and of the relationship between the two; the next section offers some examples of how this might work.

2.2 *How and Why: Anger, Anxiety and Catharsis*

Many of the current accounts of ancient magic take a symbolist approach, focusing on the resolution of social tension as an explanation for its use, but with varying levels of attention to social, cultural or historical specifics. Perhaps the most straightforward argues that magic is employed (or commissioned) by those who lack any other form of influence over others in society: “Usually it is the losers, the weak, who resort to magic, people are angered, but do not have means and power to take revenge or have satisfaction in the ordinary way.”⁴⁰ In this explanation, the use of magic is depicted as limited to individuals who are excluded, by social status, from more (it seems to be implied) mainstream and socially acceptable methods of resolving problems. However, others have rightly expanded this analysis, arguing that contexts of crisis—situations of apparently insuperable difficulty—that are exacerbated by a sense of uncertainty, can engender a feeling of powerlessness for anyone,

40 J. Braarvig, “Magic. Reconsidering the Grand Dichotomy,” in *The World of Ancient Magic*, 21–54, esp. 26–27. The quotation is intended to illustrate one example of a more widespread approach.

whatever their social status: "The performance (or commission) of a spell made it possible to regain the initiative and the hope that one could affect the outcome. The ritual thus offered both the community and the individual a means to master emotionally an otherwise difficult crisis."⁴¹

Although compelling, these theories pay little attention to specific social, cultural or historical contexts. Underpinning the assertion that users of magic are likely to be the weakest members of society seems to be an assumption that magical means were perceived, by the users themselves, as weapons of last resort that probably did not work. However, the ancient evidence suggests a culture in which magical practice was understood to be a source of power by most people, not just desperate losers, and this is understandable: after all, if your opponent is using magic, then surely it would be foolish not to do so yourself, whatever other "ordinary ways" are available. Besides, when we consider the context for which many spells were written, it remains uncertain what alternative means there may have been. Many of the spells above seem to have been prompted by a sense of anxiety or resentment; for example, that you will not receive the favor/victory/woman that you crave, that you will be the target of someone's anger/gossip/magic spell; that a dead man is not receiving appropriate rites. It is not clear what "ordinary ways" could be on hand for self-protection in such circumstances. This, in turn, suggests that a monolithic explanation of magic as resolution of crisis (as described above), while it does offer some compelling aspects, omits consideration of some key aspects.

An important dimension is the precise nature and content of such crises, which would, naturally, have varied in crucial ways for individuals of different gender and status. This raises, in turn, the question of how and why for these individuals, in particular times and places, it seemed right to respond to certain circumstances with a particular type of ritual. One attempt to offer a theory of the experience provided by ancient magical ritual that paid greater attention to the individual was famously made by the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein.⁴² Writing in response to Frazer's argument that practitioners of ritual acts expected by their activities to make actual change in the real world, Wittgenstein argued that magical rituals pertained to the emotions of those who performed them.⁴³ The position that the philosopher was taking

41 Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 150: the note attached there should be treated with care, since it does not distinguish between explanations of magical acts and accounts of witchcraft accusations.

42 L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, ed. R. Rhees (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Brynmill Press, 1979).

43 See D.Z. Phillips, "Wittgenstein, Wittgensteinianism, and Magic: A Philosophical Tragedy?" *Religious Studies* 39.2 (2003): 185–201, on why Wittgenstein was not proposing

has been much debated: some deny that he saw ritual as instrumental; others have seen in his arguments the idea that ritual could offer a catharsis for its practitioner(s), a theory which has also put been put forward by anthropologists studying the role of group rituals.⁴⁴

Turning to ancient aggressive magic, various arguments have been made against the idea that binding spells offered emotional expression, in particular, a catharsis, for their practitioners. The first turns on assumptions about the relationship of emotion and ritual: Graf has argued against the idea that the binding spell ritual is an expression (and release) of anger or desire, on the grounds that the ritual process was too complex to allow “an immediate and spontaneous discharge” of emotion.⁴⁵ He goes on to argue that the possibility that professional curse writers were commissioned to write curses makes it even less likely that the ritual of binding might offer sufferers some kind of emotional release.⁴⁶ However, these objections can be questioned from a number of different directions. First, thinking about the possible ritual process involved: some anthropological studies suggest we cannot take it for granted that spontaneity is a necessary element for the expression of anger through rituals.⁴⁷ (Nor, incidentally, is it clear that the emotions prompting the creation of a binding spell could be described simply in terms of anger; it seems highly likely that multiple, conflicting emotions were involved.⁴⁸) Second, the requisite emotional release could perhaps be found precisely through visiting a ritual specialist: comparative material suggests that part of the art of being such a professional may be the art of knowing how to engage with a client’s emotional state. Far from being a routine event, spell-writing may be understood as both an exercise in, and demonstration of, a remarkable power possessed by the spell-writer/reciter. In the ritual context, the individual creating the spell is therefore likely both to implement, and to display, his or her personal power in ways relevant to the occasion. Malinowski, for example, provides a

an emotionalist theory of religion (arguing against B. Clack, “Wittgenstein and Magic” in *Wittgenstein and Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Robert L. Arrington and Mark Addis (London: Routledge, 2001).

44 For a range of views, succinctly described, see C. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 33.

45 Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 146.

46 Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 147; cf. H.S. Versnel, “And any other part of the entire body that there might be ...’: An essay on anatomical curses” in *Ansichten griechischer Ritual*, ed. F. Graf (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998), 217–67, esp. 252–58.

47 Thomas J. Scheff, *et al.* “The Distancing of Emotion in Ritual” *Current Anthropology* 18, no. 3 (1977): 483–505, and S. Mahmood, “Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of Ṣalat” *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 4 (2001): 827–53.

48 E. Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 224–53.

famous example with his vivid observations of the Melanesian sorcerer who “filled himself with anger and hatred” when he enacted a curse, and even when performing love magic he “reproduced the behavior of a heartsick lover who has lost his common sense and is overwhelmed by passion.”⁴⁹ From a study of Finnish and Karelian charm texts, Ilomäki comes to similar conclusions.⁵⁰ She examines the apparently rare appearance of the pronoun “I” in these texts to explore its significance for the role of the spell-reciter.⁵¹ Her analysis suggests that it differs from its use in other folklore genres: although in the text it may appear as an empty verbal unit, in the moment of ritual “it is penetrated by the reciter’s self.”⁵² As such its use suggests that the charm teller must, in these moments, have committed to the ritual, trusting in, and demonstrating, his “personal magical power.”⁵³

This comparative material might also be used in examination of the arguments put forward by Faraone, who argues against a therapeutic or cathartic role for binding spells, and in particular *agoge* spells. Instead he argues for their “dispassionate use,” drawing attention to the relative lack of “emotional engagement and improvisation” in the spell texts (he excludes “prayers for justice” from this description). He suggests that, within the context of his competitive paradigm, binding spells were more likely to offer their performer “enhanced self-confidence” than provide a mechanism of emotional release. Indeed, he suggests that rather than seeing the violent aspects of *agoge* magic as expressions of the emotion of the performer of the spell, they should be viewed in terms of “a traditional and practical response to problems of access to women of marriageable age” in a context that presented social obstacles (e.g., parental disapproval, betrothal to another man, the unwillingness of the victim).⁵⁴ Unfortunately, it is hard to evaluate this approach thoroughly since it is far from clear from the extant curse texts just what the accompanying ritual comprised. Nevertheless, the details of the texts themselves make this analysis difficult to accept: for example, it is hard to imagine an individual, however confident, going so far as to invoke *chthonian* gods and/or the dead for help

49 Malinowski, “Magic, Science and Religion,” 71–72.

50 H. Ilomäki, “The Self of the Charm,” in *Charm and Charming in Europe*, ed. J. Roper (London: Macmillan, 2004), 47–58.

51 I say “apparently” here because Ilomäki notes (Ilomäki, “The Self of the Charm,” 56) that the seers from whom these charms were collected did not want to reveal materials that might give away their powers; and ii) they may have used the pronoun only in a frenzied shamanistic state not reached while dictating charms for the folklore collectors.

52 Ilomäki, “The Self of the Charm,” 56.

53 Ilomäki, “The Self of the Charm,” 56.

54 Faraone, *Love Magic*, 83, and quotation, 84.

against their victim without any emotional agitation. We should also consider the patterns of language in these texts—in particular, in later curses, the appearance of *voces magicæ* (strings of nonsense words)—which, as Versnel has argued, offered the user the potential for personal “creational processes,” evoking the “marvelous potential in another world.”⁵⁵

More specifically, the focus of these spells (as Faraone observes) on “the prospect of the female victim eagerly making love to the man who performs or commissions the spell” does suggest a certain level of personal desire on the part of the spell-performer, which hardly fits the dispassionate exercise that Faraone describes. The comparative material adduced above suggests that ritual practice by its very nature demands from its practitioners a certain level of emotional engagement. It is not clear, in this sense, just what a “dispassionate ritual” would involve or how it would be conducted. The idea that a ritual practice might climax in a catharsis that brings resolution and order from emotional chaos is a seductive one. But, as Taussig has outlined in his examination of shamanic healing rituals among the Putumayan Indians, such a description in itself is a magical rite, providing the reader with a climatic “release of a new meaning rescued from the blockage of disorder.” His own experience of the shamanic practice he described was far less ordered. The power of the experience, and in particular the imagery used in the ritual, lies in “its insistently questioning and undermining the search for order.”⁵⁶

Jack Winkler’s analysis of *agogē* spells, which highlights their “rhetoric, drama, and social psychology,” offers an example of how the acknowledgement of disorder might be found in the ritual of binding spells.⁵⁷ Within a detailed scrutiny of ancient gender relations, acknowledging the pathological aspects of *eros* and the nature of personal success in an “agonistic, masked duplicitous society,” Winkler argues that certain magical texts had a therapeutic role that included a series of displacements. Thus, the torments felt by the agent of the curse are imagined afflicting the target; the agent of the curse assumes the authority of the gods he invokes, rather than being in the control of another; and, finally, he persuades the deity that his victim deserves to be punished.⁵⁸ As a result, “*agogai* ... turn out to make sense as psychodramas in which intensely

55 Versnel, “The Poetics of the Magical Charm” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, 105–58, quotations from 153 and 155.

56 M. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the White Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 390.

57 Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” 224. Faraone, *Love Magic*, 82, describes Winkler and Wittgenstein as espousing a “cathartic or therapeutic” model. Winkler’s analysis of the gendered nature of these practices has been challenged: on this aspect, see further below.

58 Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” 226–27.

disturbing emotions are manipulated and treated.”⁵⁹ Although Winkler’s approach has been described as attributing a cathartic role to binding spells, his analysis ascribes a more complex function for the spells. Although he does not emphasize this paradox, Winkler notes how the creation of an *agogē* spell was “a therapy that not only proclaims its own extremity but even in a certain sense its own impossibility,” and, he notes how it comprises a “fictitious denial and transfer.”⁶⁰ Even as the ritual reassigns roles, it emphasizes the weakness that it seeks to treat, it highlights the agent’s sickness, suffering and actual lack of control.

Moreover, in a second paradox that Winkler observes, these texts conduct a discourse on female desire and female pleasure—or rather, we might rephrase it, on male ideals of female desire and pleasure—and they speak of this desire as something autonomous.⁶¹ Seen in this light, *agogē* spells seem to offer, not a catharsis of pent-up emotion, but a more complex treatment, one that acknowledges, even brings to light, a series of paradoxes: they provide an alternative and powerful set of images of what is not; they grant the spell writer a power that he does not have; they highlight the power of women in a society that denies it. Winkler emphasizes how these texts “paradoxically incorporate rather than suppress women’s desire,” and the social context in which it occurs.⁶² As Dickie has demonstrated, further nuances to this model—and to the context of gender relations—can be introduced by investigating, in more detail, both the evidence for the use of such spells *by* women and the changing nature of social roles available to women.⁶³ Nevertheless, as noted above, our resulting analyses must proceed cautiously: while it may be that many of the spells “attribute a considerable level of sexual freedom and sexual experience to the female victims,” this does not necessarily mean that the spells should be regarded as documentary evidence for the lives of women, providing accurate depictions of their situations and experiences.⁶⁴

59 Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” 230.

60 Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” 226.

61 Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” 233.

62 Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” 216.

63 In particular, it must be noted that half of the erotic and separation spells in the Greek and Demotic formulary papyri use the *deina* formula, which can be applied to both men and women: see Pachoumi, “Erotic and Separation spells,” 314, following Dickie, “Who Practised,” 567. For discussion and analysis of women’s use of pre-Imperial erotic binding spells aimed at separating couples, see Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 210–28.

64 Cf. Pachoumi, “Erotic and Separation spells,” 307, who concludes that this excludes “the possibility that these women were well-guarded maidens in their natal homes.” But as Winkler, (“The Constraints of Eros,” 233) observes, “The social implications of this autonomous desire are alluded to in the neighbouring clauses that request forgetfulness

While the role of gender remains contested, nevertheless, many modern explanations of ancient aggressive magic suggest that magic offered individuals in ancient society a method of alleviating personal tensions, by helping to calm and even purge emotions that could not otherwise be expressed or resolved. These dynamics no doubt played their part, but further analysis may suggest a more complex model of social interaction. In particular, the common understanding of magic as the pursuit of a lone individual working out (his) frustrations and desires in secret may have implicitly limited our understanding of the nature and role of ancient magic and its practitioners. For example, such a definition elides the idea that a city or community might also, quite openly, practice magic: the argument seems to be that if the lone, rebellious practitioner is a characteristic of “magic,” then city(-sanctioned) rituals must automatically become a matter of “religion” not magic, whatever their nature.⁶⁵ However, there are striking similarities between some individual magical rituals and certain community ritual practices. There is some, albeit scanty, evidence that certain communities may have enacted types of binding spell to protect themselves from warfare or from supernatural or mortal hostility.⁶⁶ Slightly more evidence is available showing defensive measures taken by communities who viewed themselves, or their members, as having been victims of magical attack. For example, both the Cyrenean *Lex Sacra* and the *Lex Sacra* from Selinus appear to have offered city-sanctioned rituals for members of their community who found themselves visited by supernatural entities.⁶⁷ In other evidence we find descriptions of a community resorting to magical action in order to protect itself from supernatural aggression: there are ancient literary accounts of Sparta and Athens, respectively, hiring spirit-raisers to work some kind of spell in their defence. Epigraphic evidence shows that a

of parents and relatives, husband and children.” See Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 212–13, on the arguments of Faraone and Dickie regarding the gendered nature of erotic magic.

- 65 The anti-social nature of magic is a characteristic that differentiates it from religion in the writings of (e.g.) M. Mauss, and H. Hubert, *A General Theory of Magic* (1902; Reprint, London; New York: Routledge, 1972). But the distinction goes back much earlier than this (see Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 229).
- 66 See discussion in C. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 74–85 and App. 4, as well as above, Wilburn, Chapter 18.
- 67 *Lex Sacra* from Cyrene: SEG ix 72, LSS 115, see R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), App. 2. The *lex sacra* from Selinus also includes instructions for purification from supernatural entities (col. B, 1–13); see M.H. Jameson, D.R. Jordan, and R.D. Kotansky, *A Lex Sacra from Selinus*. Greek Roman and Byzantine Monographs 11 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 54–58, esp. 55 where they draw an explicit parallel between that text and the purification law from Cyrene.

city might attempt to exert supernatural power on its own behalf: the public curse of the city of Teos, was aimed against (among others) anyone who should use *pharmaka* (which may mean “drugs” or “spells”) against the community.⁶⁸

The much-debated question of whether we should distinguish magic from religion cannot be pursued in detail here. Nevertheless, this brief discussion raises questions about how an authoritative discourse may shape definitions and, in the process, grant particular practices legitimacy while denying it to others. This remains a particularly valuable consideration as we turn to the second discourse in which magic is linked with social tensions: accusations of magic.

3 Discourse B: Magical Accusations and Society

3.1 *Who and When: Envy, Gossip and Misfortune*

Ancient evidence suggests that people may have suspected, or even known, when spells had been cast against them. As in other cultures worldwide, in the ancient world, personal misfortune and failure were often attributed to a malevolent magical attack by an enemy, often prompted by envy.⁶⁹ As plentiful anthropological studies reveal, the belief that one is the target of a spell, for those who believe in the potency of magic, can be very powerful.⁷⁰ Identifying a perpetrator may have been relatively straightforward. For example, some curses were probably put on public display, perhaps in the local sanctuary.⁷¹

68 Spirit-raisers by individuals: an unnamed consultant at the oracle of Dodona asks if hiring ‘Dorios the spirit-raiser’ is a good idea (see Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 114); when he is haunted by Cleonice, a young woman he has murdered, the Spartan general Pausanias visits an oracle of the dead (Plutarch, *Moralia*, 555c) but, in another account, he also considers hiring spirit-raisers (Pausanias, 3.17). Spirit-raisers hired by cities: according to one account, when, after his death, Pausanias proceeds to haunt the Spartans, they hire spirit-raisers (scholia to Euripides, *Alcmeon*, 1127–8, with Plutarch, *Homeric Studies*, F1 Bernardakis (1891)); Athens summons Epimenides from Knossos to purify the city after the murder of Cylon and his supporters: Diogenes Laertes, 1.109–112. Public curse of the city of Teos (c. 470 BCE), see R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), no. 30.

69 P. Brown, “Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise of Christianity” in *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas (London: Psychology Press, 1970), 25; Euripides, *Alcmeon*, fr. 67, ed. A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1889); Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, 3.14–5. Magical explanations could coexist with more spiteful ones: Cicero, *Brutus*, 217, and Libanius *Orations*, 1.43 and 62, and 245–49, discussed in more detail below.

70 J. Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

71 See discussion in Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 217–18.

But another answer can be pieced together from a consideration of the ancient evidence in the context of comparative historical and anthropological studies. Across time and place, these studies pinpoint a key aspect of the social dynamics surrounding magic: gossip. From sixteenth-century German villagers to modern-day inhabitants of Soweto, it seems that gossip coupled with envy has played and continues to play a significant factor in raising and spreading knowledge/suspicions that magic has been employed by one person against another. Ancient victims of magic probably knew when and why they were likely to be the target of a supernatural strike—because they lived with the people who would use it against them. Indeed, it may be that just as magic itself involved recognisable ritual activities, so too did the role of “victim of magic”: the ritualization of physical and social experiences by so-called victims also manufactured the phenomenon of “magic,” as we will see.⁷²

So, if one was recognizably a victim of “magic,” the question was what to do in response. The suspicion that one had been attacked oneself might in turn provoke one to issue an attack in kind oneself, suggesting a “magical arms-race” of the kind that Daniel Ogden evokes as a characteristic of ancient daily life.⁷³ Alternatively, at least in the Imperial period and later, if the attack provided fatal, one might simply display one’s suspicions on the grave *stele* of the presumed victim—although this did not usually involve naming the perpetrator.⁷⁴ Such inscriptions usually ask the god Helios for justice, and feature an image of two raised hands. Both of these approaches keep the name of the magic-worker concealed. In contrast, a third and final approach would be to expose the magical attack to the cold light of the civic judicial system.⁷⁵ As anthropologists have observed, the process of bringing witchcraft accusations into the open

72 E. Eidinow, “Ancient Greco-Roman Magic and the Agency of Victimhood,” *Numen* 64 (2017): 394–417.

73 Ogden, “Binding Spells”; see, for example, NGCT 24 (with Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 67 and 224) and CTBS, no. 107.

74 For example, a stele asking for revenge for the murder of one Heraklea (CTBS, no. 185); see also H.S. Versnel, “Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers,” in *Magika Hiera*, and Versnel, “Writing Mortals and Reading Gods Appeal to the Gods as a Dual Strategy in Social Control,” in *Demokratie, Recht und soziale Kontrolle im klassischen Athen*, ed. D. Cohen (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), 37–76; F. Graf, “Victimology: or, How to Deal with Untimely Death,” in *Women and Gender in Ancient Religions: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. S.P. Ahearne-Kroll, P.A. Holloway, and J.A. Kelhoffer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 228–40; R.G. Edmonds III, “Blaming the Witch: Some Reflections upon Unexpected Death,” in *Women and Gender in Ancient Religions*, 241–54; Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*, 191–211.

75 See D. Frankfurter, “Fetus Magic and Sorcery Fears in Roman Egypt,” *GRBS* 46 (2006): 37–62; E. Eidinow, “Patterns of Persecution: ‘Witchcraft’ Trials in Classical Athens,” *Past and Present*, 208, no. 1 (2010): 9–35, and Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death*.

is paradoxical in itself, giving witchcraft rumours the publicity that enhances their power, while at the same time allowing opportunities for fears to be resolved. Indeed, Peter Geschiere has suggested that this is why, in recent years in the East Province of Cameroon, witchcraft cases have been brought before the state courts—they provide a new public arena in which to bring to light fears of witchcraft.⁷⁶ Was this also the case with ancient magic trials?

For a first-hand description of a community response to an accusation of magic in the ancient world, we return to the trial of Apuleius. As noted, the case brought against him was motivated by envy of his good fortune on the part of those who were being deprived, by his marriage, of his wife's wealth. As Apuleius makes clear at the beginning of his defence, it was the rumours promulgated by his opponents about his various activities, in particular the "love magic" that had helped him to achieve his marriage, which finally brought him to court. But in case this seems like a unique occurrence, another vivid example can be found in the case of Libanius, a teacher of rhetoric in the fourth century CE, a cultured and cosmopolitan man who trained in Athens and Constantinople, finally accepting the chair of rhetoric in Antioch.⁷⁷ In his autobiographical writing he describes how he was frequently accused of supernatural aggression by rival speakers; he, in turn, is also the victim of a magical attack. In his description of this event in particular, we learn how, when misfortune is attributed to an attack of supernatural violence, gossip can help to identify the guilty party. Libanius reports how "my friends kept urging me, and each other too, to prosecute certain individuals who were rumoured to be responsible for this." Libanius restrains his friends, "telling them to offer up prayers rather than to have folk arrested for secret machinations."⁷⁸

Both of these accounts illustrate the roles played by envy and gossip in the social process of creating an explanation of what might remain, otherwise, an inexplicable misfortune. Those who suffer—whether because of their own misfortune or the fortune of others—understand their experiences to be rooted in the hostile feelings of their neighbours. The social and emotional dynamics of the local community help members of that community to make

76 P. Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*, trans. Janet Roitman (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 204. For those concerned with the use of terms (as raised by my n.2 above), Geschiere notes (225, n. 1) that he uses the terms "witchcraft" and "sorcery" interchangeably on the grounds that the distinction does not apply very well to the Cameroonian societies he studies.

77 This example and the role of gossip discussed more extensively in Eidinow, "Patterns of Persecution" and *Envy, Poison, and Death*.

78 Libanius, *Orationes*, 1.248, trans. A.F. Norman, Loeb Classical Library 451 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).

sense of events. Together, they can reach a consensus, their conclusions based on shared feelings of fear, suspicion, envy, and hostility, their knowledge of these feelings based on gossip; and that consensus may lead to action.⁷⁹ As the two examples demonstrate, how this interaction plays out (in particular, where the players will turn for resolution of the situation) will depend on the context and characters involved; so, for example, Libanius was urged to take his rumoured attacker to court but refused, while Apuleius of Madaurus insisted that those whispering against him bring formal charges instead.⁸⁰

These cases allow us to see something of the specific interpersonal dynamics that provoked these flurries of accusations, but in aggregate they allow us to plot more widespread patterns of social tension, arising out of particular historical circumstances, which may have increased the susceptibility of certain relationships to such accusations. For example, Apuleius's trial may have evoked a clash between local community values and Roman sophistication typical of its time, where the trial was a vehicle of expression for the anxiety of a community in the throes of cultural transition.⁸¹ Libanius's trial may be evidence for another phase of socio-political conflict: as Peter Brown has argued, trials for maleficent magical attack became increasingly common in the late Imperial period because socio-political changes provoked a clash of systems of power, where those who held the new fixed, defined and vested roles confronted those with more traditional and (ill-defined) power that was based "on the imponderable, almost numinous prestige of classical culture and aristocratic values in Late Roman society."⁸² These accusations of such attacks were a

79 On the important role of gossip in accusations of magic, see, for example, Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic," H.S. Versnel, "Punish Those Who Rejoice in Our Misery: On Curse Tablets and Schadenfreude," in *The World of Ancient Magic*, 125–62, and more recently Graf, "Victimology" and Edmonds III, "Blaming the Witch," who emphasizes the uncertainty of such accusations, also noted by Versnel, "Punish Those Who Rejoice in Our Misery," 133. See further Eidinow, "Patterns of Persecution" and *Envy, Poison, and Death* for detailed analysis of these social processes.

80 For examples of the role of gossip and envy see: Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words*, Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism*, and P.J. Stewart and A. Strathern, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors and Gossip* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Eidinow, *Envy, Poison, and Death* focuses on these two phenomena in detail, to explore the context of accusations of, and trials for, illicit ritual practice in fourth-century BCE Athens. For examples of situations where law courts rather than local social processes have provided resolution see Frankfurter, "Fetus Magic," Eidinow, "Patterns of Persecution," and *Envy, Poison, and Death*.

81 K. Bradley, "Appearing for the Defense: Apuleius on Display", in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, ed. Jonathan Edmondson and A. Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

82 P. Brown, "Sorcery, Demons," 18, 22–3. According to his own account, Brown refers to this as "sorcery," consciously aligning himself with Evans-Pritchard's distinction between this

way of expressing resentments and targeting anomalous sources of power, in a realm where political opposition of a more organised mundane sort was firmly suppressed: "Sorcery beliefs in the Later Empire, therefore, may be used like radioactive traces in an x-ray: where these assemble, we have a hint of pockets of uncertainty and competition."⁸³

We may also be able to find larger patterns across cultures. For example, the community of Roman courtiers in Brown's analysis is typical insofar as it is a small group of people well known to each other; Robin Briggs's exploration of accusations of magical antagonism in the context of early modern European witchcraft focuses, as his title suggests, on "Witches and Neighbors"; while anthropologists working in Africa have observed that the power of witchcraft is thought to increase with the intimacy of the relationship.⁸⁴ Attempts to map such patterns have increased in their sophistication and specificity. In her introduction to *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, the anthropologist Mary Douglas noted the rigidity of earlier functionalist analyses, which tended to rely upon a single paradigm to explain witchcraft accusations—moving from the argument that witchcraft beliefs maintain a social system, to accounts that saw an increase in witchcraft accusations as symptoms of a general breakdown of society.⁸⁵ In her search for a new paradigm, Douglas observed how the work of historians, with their more long-term perspective, and anthropologists, analyzing living cultures "in microscopic detail" could inform each other, and highlighted the possibilities of locating cross-cultural patterns as well as emphasizing the importance of paying attention to cultural specificity.⁸⁶

and "witchcraft." Other anthropologists, working in African, have found the distinction to be less clear (see above, n. 76); on the use of terminology see further n. 2 above.

83 P. Brown, "Sorcery, Demons," 25.

84 R. Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours* (London: Harper Collins, 1996); M. Douglas, "Introduction," in *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, xxiv and xxv. See also Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, 11, and A. Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 67 for similar observations about accusations of magical aggression in Cameroon and South Africa, respectively.

85 M. Douglas, "Introduction," xiii–xix. Her analysis did not abandon a functional analysis altogether, finding it a useful explanatory framework so long as it was sufficiently flexible and sophisticated to take account of different social structures.

86 Douglas's brief analysis posited that cross-cultural commonalities of witchcraft accusations should be analyzed on two levels—the individual and the community. For example, individuals use the accusation of witchcraft as a weapon of attack "where relationships are ambiguous": the relationships may be competitive or "it may be that some class of persons comes into an altogether anomalous position of advantage or disadvantage so that the umbrella of community protection is withdrawn from them." If witchcraft suspicions and accusations always first occur at an individual level, she goes on, what may then

Historical and anthropological studies have continued to pursue the figure of the malevolent magical practitioner, usually in terms of “the witch,” across time and place—and the desire to make cross-cultural comparisons has waxed and waned.⁸⁷ The search for generalities can, of course, risk the loss of crucial specifics, including age, gender, status, social organization and practice, which reflect the socio-cultural structures of a particular society. Nevertheless, as more recent work in anthropology has argued, the pervasiveness of beliefs in malevolent magic and its practitioners is part of what makes them so compelling. Drawing out parallels and patterns may, in fact, help to highlight crucial differences, making assumptions explicit, and underlining local meanings that go beyond the question of “witchcraft” into more far-reaching cultural questions: “Witchcraft is more than a mere social construction; it is about power and inequality, individual and collective interests, the parameters of belief and action, the conditions of knowing, and the criteria of knowledge. It is about the manner in which people apprehend the world and the way in which they attempt to interpret and explain it.”⁸⁸ Indeed, recently, some scholars have suggested that “witchcraft” may be a conceptual and analytical category equivalent to (and potentially more useful than) gender or “other.”⁸⁹

4 Conclusion: The Discourses of Magic

Sarapammon’s spell has lasted. Well over a thousand years after he buried his doll, that object still exerts an eerie fascination: for whom did it have meaning, and why; what was that meaning? Similarly, discussion of Apuleius’ trial continues, and exploration of the hostilities evoked by and with accusations of supernatural aggression. These are just two illustrations of the resilience of magic—or rather of certain discourses concerned with magic. This essay has explored some aspects of two of those discourses, which seek to shed light on

happen at the community level depends on “the state of community politics and on what pattern of relationships needs redefining at the time.” (Douglas, “Introduction,” xxv).

87 R. Hutton, “Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft: Potential for a New Collaboration?,” *The Historical Journal* 47, 2 (2004): 413–34, and for a broad, but detailed historical overview of the study of witches and witchcraft, see R. Hutton, *The Witch: A History of Fear from Ancient Times to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

88 G. Bond and D. Ciekawy, *Witchcraft Dialogues: Anthropological and Philosophical Exchanges* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001), 25.

89 Rowlands, “Usual Suspects?,” Gaskill, “Masculinity and Witchcraft,” 184, and L. Kounine, “The Gendering of Witchcraft: Defence Strategies of Men and Women in German Witchcraft Trials,” *German History* 31 (2013): 299.

social tensions in ancient society, mapping out the significance of particular practices and activities. By means of these discourses, we can see how both the practice of magic and accusations of magical practice can provide a role for human agency in otherwise inexplicable or uncontrollable events. Whether the users are practitioners of magic or accuse others of magic-working, magic offers them a tool for participating more effectively in social interaction, making and shaping relationships, gaining power. For the scholar, these discourses about magic shine some light on hidden social interactions, allowing a glimpse of otherwise implicit individual and group dynamics, including suspicions, fears, hopes and desires. As such, "magic" is a term that, although rich with meaning, can acquire a precise definition only in context. It is not so much a specific entity as a heuristic tool: it describes the relationship between certain belief systems/ritual practices with networks of social and political power, within a particular culture, at a particular time and place.

However, we must not forget the role of the interpreter of these discourses of magic, an interpreter who is, in turn, also located within a particular culture, and specific social setting. As we have noted above, the academic discourse of magic experiences its own trends. So, for example, Douglas noted the drawbacks of previous paradigms of research; more recently, some scholars have argued that social explanations of witchcraft accusations tend not to consider the violence of these phenomena.⁹⁰ The stories we can tell about our evidence are forged from our own assumptions: thus, for example, magic may not be the desperate act of the underdog, as we may like to imagine, but a form of empowerment for marginal groups in response to oppressive social structures or norms.⁹¹ Again, the difficulties of drawing a firm line between a city's/community's religious activity and an individual's magical action indicates the subjective nature of these terms, which are often used as if stunningly objective.

This point leads to a final observation: this essay has discussed two aspects of ancient life where scholars have identified links between magic and social tension, and the discourses that have developed around these arenas. What has become apparent is how these discourses about magic themselves work magic. They transform object and text into evidence for seething emotions, captivating the reader with plausible accounts of competition, anxiety, and

90 J. Siegel, *Naming the Witch* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

91 Cf. R. Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20, and see T. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic and Witchcraft in Present-day England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism*.

fear, conjuring ancient hatreds. For example, one of the reasons that we tend to describe city/community activities as religious (even when they resemble the magical rituals of the individual) may lie in the discourse of accusations of malevolent magical practice, in which cities or communities provide (non-magical) solutions or protection against magic, helping to tame and control the elements within them. In this way, the scholar and his object of study are perhaps closer than they first appear: "What appeals most to the imagination is the ease with which the magician achieves his ends. He has the gift of conjuring up more things than any ordinary mortals can dream of. His words, his gestures, his glances, even his thoughts are forces in themselves. His own person emanates influences before which nature and men, spirits and gods must give way."⁹²

5 Future Directions

Some suggestions for future themes of study have already cropped up during this paper: for example, the need for reflexivity, not only about the assumptions that guide the application of interpretative models, but also with regard to the models themselves. We need to take care when sorting data into categories, in case this approach means that we fail to see information or explanations that might otherwise emerge from the evidence, and keep in mind the potentially complex and multiple motivations of our ancient writers. Approaches to the study of magic and witchcraft in other periods of history and in other disciplines may offer further inspiration for possible future methodological directions for the study of ancient magic. For example, some early modern historians have moved away from the use of anthropological models to other disciplines, making provocative use of psychoanalytic approaches to try to understand the mindset of those involved in witchcraft trials—both accusers and accused.⁹³ In turn, cross-cultural work in anthropology has largely drawn on more proximate material to examine the evolution of the figure of the witch in response to ongoing political events.⁹⁴ In both these disciplines, there has

92 Mauss and Hubert, *A General Theory of Magic*, 41.

93 D. Purkis, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth Century Representations* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996); L. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London: Psychology Press, 1994); and L. Roper, *Witch Craze. Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

94 For example, Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*; Bond and Ciekawy, *Witchcraft Dialogues*; Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence*.

been an increasing focus on local practice and beliefs rather than a pursuit of overarching monolithic explanations, and a simultaneous insistence that this local focus can only be analysed adequately if it is viewed within its larger socio-political context. Something similar is also happening in the discipline of ancient history, where sufficient evidence allows it. At a 2009 conference on magic, for example, scholars discussed projects for mapping the evidence for magical practices, in an attempt to establish and investigate linguistic diversity in magical texts across place and over time.⁹⁵

Coupling this data with a greater focus on the specific cultural and community context of particular texts could also help to explore and differentiate local patterns of motivation, not only giving insights into the magical activities themselves, but also helping to shed valuable light on questions of social dynamics within particular communities—and how these change over time. This paper has focused largely on magic as a weapon of assault in situations of social tension, but the category of magic does, of course, include other ritual practices, including, for example, protection against supernatural aggression in the form of charms and amulets. As well as understanding how people in different parts of the ancient world, at different times, may have attacked each other using magic and accusations of magic, examining locally and temporally specific modes of self-protection, and how these develop, would increase understanding of both social and divine relationships. The important question of the “materiality of magic” is one that is beginning to be excitingly explored, and can further sharpen our understanding of the ways in which these practices were part of ancient lives.⁹⁶

In all these inquiries, the question of cultural influences requires careful handling. For example, the syncretism of texts of the Imperial period and later can seem baffling: it is necessary to try to tease out the influences of different cultures on each other, to seek the transformation rather than simply the survival of traditions, in order to shed a stimulating and provocative light on this topic.⁹⁷ So far, these observations have focused on the phenomena of ritual practice; but the evidence discussed above also concerns *accounts* of aggressive magical practice. The construction and transmission of such narratives is also an important focus of research, most recently explored at a conference on “Narrating Witchcraft: Agency, Discourse and Power”, which examined relevant narratives from different times and cultures and the different possible

95 The conference was “I contesti magici nell’antichità”, held in Rome, 4–6 November, 2009.

96 See D. Boschung, and J.N. Bremmer, *The Materiality of Magic* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink GmbH & Co. Verlags, 2015), and see above, Frankfurter, Chapter 24.

97 For example, D. Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017).

theoretical approaches that could be brought to bear in analysis.⁹⁸ This raises the question of authority and legitimacy—and introduces a final theme: the increasing integration of research on magical practices with studies of what have traditionally been thought of as religious practices and the incorporation of these two elements more generally in studies in ancient history. The use of ritual practices to provoke or alleviate, protect from or aggravate social tensions can deepen our understanding of local and wider relationships between ancient men and women, and between them and their gods.

Suggested Readings

- Eidinow, Esther, "Ancient Greco-Roman Magic and the Agency of Victimhood," *Numen* 64 (2017): 394–417.
- Eidinow, Esther, *Envy, Poison, and Death: Women on Trial in Classical Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 224–53.
- Eidinow, Esther, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk Among the Ancient Greeks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Faraone, Christopher A., *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Frankfurter, David, "The Social Context of Women's Erotic Magic in Antiquity," in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*, ed. K. Stratton and D. Kalleres (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 319–39.
- Jordan, David, "Three Curse Tablets," in *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4–8 may 1997*, ed. Jordan, H. Montgomery, and E. Thomassen (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999), 115–24.
- Pachoumi, Eleni, "The Erotic and Separation spells of the Magical Papyri and Defixiones," *GRBS* 53 (2013): 294–352.
- Rives, James, "Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime" *Classical Antiquity* 22, no. 2 (2003): 313–39.
- Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors and Gossip* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- Winkler, Jack, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1990).

98 "Narrating Witchcraft: Agency, Discourse and Power" held at the Max-Weber-Kolleg in Erfurt, 30th June–1st July, 2016. The proceedings will be published in the journal *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 2018–19.

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David Frankfurter



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