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Ullmann-Margalit (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1992), 43–92. For a critical reassessment, see William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton, “Introduction: The Problematic Status of Astrology and Alchemy in Premodern Europe,” in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 1–37.

7. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 327–34.

8. See, for example, Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Bruce T. Moran, *Chemical Pharmacy Enters the University: Johannes Hartmann and the Didactic Care of Chymia in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Madison, Wis.: American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, 1991).

9. William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, “Alchemy vs. Chemistry: The Etymological Origins of a Historiographical Mistake,” *Early Science and Medicine* 3, no. 1 (1998): 32–65.

10. William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the Fate of Helmontian Chemistry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

11. John Henry, “The Fragmentation of Renaissance Occultism and the Decline of Magic,” *History of Science* 46, no. 1 (2008): 1–48.

12. See, for example, William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari, and Shaul Shaked, eds. *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011. Pp. 390. ISBN 978-90-04-20351-8.

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Over the past forty years, the study of ancient, late antique, and medieval “magic” has become a burgeoning field. Scholars have benefited from the (revised) publication of substantial corpora of ancient *grimoires* and applied magical devices (especially amulets, curse tablets, and magic bowls),<sup>1</sup> translations of magical materials,<sup>2</sup> and a host of monographs, edited volumes, and essays on ancient magic and magicians.<sup>3</sup> These studies have contributed greatly to our understanding of the nature and scope of premodern magic and its practitioners in diverse times (antiquity, late antiquity, and the medieval world), spaces (especially Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome), languages (for instance, Akkadian, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin), and religions (particularly, indigenous Egyptian religion, Greco–Roman religion[s], Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

Yet most of these studies provide either a general or synthetic analysis of magical texts and practices, or confine themselves to the manifestation of “magic” at a single historical instance or in one particular religious or cultural setting. As a result, there has been little focused and sustained reflection on the ways ancient magical texts and practices have remained consistent or have developed within and across temporal, spatial, linguistic, and religious boundaries.

Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari, and Shaul Shaked respond to this scholarly need in their *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*. The thirteen essays (together with an introduction) in this edited volume are versions of papers originally presented at a three-day conference held at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem between 17 and 19 July 2006. What gives the collection its unity is that the papers coalesce around the complex interaction of the old and the new in magical rituals—the “continuity” and “innovation.” Moreover, they all pay particular attention to the scribal milieu in which these rites were composed and transmitted. Although there are chapters that address the Akkadian, Egyptian, Greek, and Arabic magical traditions, the balance of the volume is concerned with magic in Hebrew and Aramaic scribal communities.

After the editors’ brief introductory essay, the book opens with Tzvi Abusch’s “The Revision of Babylonian Anti-witchcraft Incantations,” which traces the redactional activity evident in the Akkadian magical series *Maqlû* (“Burning”), the longest and arguably most important extant Mesopotamian collection of incantations against “witchcraft.” Focusing his attention on two incantations, Abusch contends that the form of both incantations as they have come down to us is the result of multiple expansions and interpolations. For Abusch, this redactional activity is signaled primarily by syntactical and conceptual shifts in the text, and secondarily by the presence of similar or identical phrases that bracket likely interpolations (i.e., “repetitive resumption” [*Wiederaufnahme*]). Abusch argues that, in contrast to the limited powers of the witch in the “original” form of the incantations, the incantations in their present, expanded form demonstrate that the conception of “witch” has evolved to become “an almost universally powerful being” (38). Abusch appends a transcription of *Maqlû* II:19–75 and a partial transcription of *Maqlû* IV:1–79 in an excursus.

In “From Ritual to Magic,” the first of two chapters treating magical traditions in Egypt, Joachim Friedrich Quack examines the cultural background of the *charitesion* (i.e., a charm for favor). In contradistinction to Christopher Faraone, who has hypothesized a Greek origin for the *charitesion* based on certain Mesopotamian precedents, Quack (following Roy Kotansky) stresses the priority of an Egyptian context for this type of charm. Quack supports this

view by relating the *charitesion* to the numerous requests for divine and royal favor in magical and non-magical contexts in Egypt (from the Pharaonic period through the Roman era).

In “Scribal Practices in the Production of Magic Handbooks in Egypt,” Jacco Dieleman engages directly with the volume’s central theme of continuity and innovation in his analysis of hieratic and demotic magic formularies. Situating both within the Egyptian temple scriptoria, Dieleman draws attention to the ways demotic scribes engaged with the hieratic formulary tradition: on the one hand, editors and copyists of demotic formularies preserved hieratic conventions, especially in the use of organizational devices for recipes and (frequently) in the division of recipes into “compartmentalized” sections; on the other hand, these formularies also reflect the creation of a new recipe type that integrates what would have been clearly demarcated sections of the recipe in the hieratic tradition. For Dieleman, the creation of this new recipe type in demotic formularies was a deliberate response to the growing length and complexity of magical rituals.

Fritz Graf’s “Magic and Divination” investigates the relationship between magic and divination in pre-Christian taxonomies. For Graf, despite both positive and negative assessments of magic, as reflected in two oracles of Apollo (one from Ephesus and the other reconstructed from Eusebius’s citation in *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Porphyry’s *De Philosophia*), residents of the Greco-Roman world agreed that magic was a discrete area of expertise and, hence, distinct from divinatory specialization. Graf concludes that these categories merged only when Christians, such as Augustine, incorporated divination into the scope of demonic activity.

In “Magic and Medicine in the Roman Imperial Period,” Christopher A. Faraone argues that the gulf between “medicine” and “magic” in the Roman Empire was not as wide as previously thought. Citing close parallels between ancient “doctors” and “magicians” in two case studies (diagnosing and treating the “Wandering Womb” and the pathological typology of the human head in the Anapa gem), Faraone challenges the assumption that magicians and doctors necessarily ran in divergent social and intellectual circles. Instead, Faraone demonstrates that at least the magicians who treated the wandering womb and the specialist behind the Anapa gem were knowledgeable in contemporary medical thought. Conversely, he also points out that many of the doctors of the same period were acquainted with (and occasionally prescribed) apotropaic devices.

In the first chapter on Jewish magic, “When Magical Techniques and Mystical Practices Become Neighbors,” Ithamar Gruenwald develops what he deems an “anthropological” theory of magic and Hekhalot mysticism. Utilizing

this theory, Gruenwald offers a close reading of an amatory recipe (in two parts) from the late antique Hebrew manual *Sefer ha-Razim*. Here he argues, inter alia, that the efficacy of this recipe was contingent on a transformation of quotidian reality, achieved by using sacrificial, cosmological, and other ritual language and played out in the cosmic sphere.

In “Transmission and Transformation of Spells,” Shaul Shaked examines the general compositional and transmissional tendencies of Aramaic magic bowls from late antique Mesopotamia through a synoptic analysis of three exemplars from the Schøyen Collection. All three use overlapping textual units and were made for the same female client, Māhdukh(τ) daughter of Nēwāndukh(τ). For Shaked, the texts on these bowls both converge and diverge from each other, and so demonstrate the diverse ways magical practitioners engaged with their prototypes. Regardless of whether the practitioners who used these bowls had access to handbooks, the bowls reflect the use of memory and repetition as transmission aids and, hence, reveal scribal transmission habits analogous to those of Jewish liturgical texts prior to their codification.

Also focusing on the magic bowls, Dan Levene’s “This Is a *Qybl’* for Overturning Sorceries” analyzes synoptically five bowls from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin and three from the British Museum, each of which identifies itself as a *qybl’* (i.e., a counter-magical charm that directs magical aggression against a named “antagonist”). Levene highlights other derivations of the root *qbl*, both nominal (“darkness”) and prepositional (e.g., “opposite” [*lqbl*]). He then notes similar texts as well as corresponding cord and bitumen markings on pairs of *qybl’* bowls, indicating that the bowls were originally sealed together. In an apparent relationship between text, praxis, and artifact, Levene tentatively suggests that the *qybl’* text created a pun with the physical praxis of joining the bowls with bitumen and a cord (i.e., placing them “opposite” to each other, thus creating “dark” space between them). While Levene remains aporetic concerning the chronological relationship between the *qybl’* formula (the counter-charm) and the *qybl’* form (the joined bowls), he entertains the possibility that the *qybl’* form may share a transmission history with related magic bowl formulas.

Kocku von Stuckrad’s “Astral Magic in Ancient Jewish Discourse” offers a discursive approach to astral magic in “Jewish” contexts. Von Stuckrad highlights that the study of “Jewish”—and “Christian”—astrology has been impeded by the theological assumption that “Jews” and “Christians” eschewed astrology. Abandoning this naive bias, von Stuckrad examines three “discursive fields” of astral magic (the control of cosmic powers, devotion to planets, and heavenly journeys) with the help of various sources, such as *The Testament of Solomon*, the

Greco–Egyptian magical papyri, the *Sefer ha-Razim*, and the Nag Hammadi literature. For von Stuckrad, the discursive world of ancient astral magic reveals diverse approaches to allegedly discrete categories like “astrology,” “paganism,” “Judaism,” and “Christianity.” As a result, von Stuckrad concludes that while facets of early “Judaism” and “Christianity” certainly rejected astrology and magic as forms of “paganism,” there is also evidence that demonstrates that many “Jews” and “Christians” actively incorporated ancient astrological and magical traditions and assumptions into their identities—albeit in manifold ways.

In “The Planets, the Jews and the Beginnings of Jewish Astrology,” Reimund Leicht attempts to account for the sudden emergence of a Jewish planetary discourse in the late antique period. Leicht notes the rather surprising paucity of planetary astronomy and astrology in Jewish literature during the biblical and second temple periods. For Leicht, Jewish interest in the planets developed only in the late second or early third century, when calendrical concerns over the *tequfot* (the four seasons) necessitated that rabbis adopt the Greco–Roman practice of organizing time around the planetary rulers. This development within rabbinic culture, in turn, led to the legitimization of a Jewish planetary astrology that continued throughout late antiquity and beyond.

Yuval Harari’s “Metatron and the Treasure of Gold” analyzes a dream inquiry from the Cairo Genizah that invokes Metatron to help a certain *sedaqah* discover treasure. After an introductory survey of Jewish and non-Jewish views of revelatory dreams in antiquity and an analysis that situates *Sedaqah*’s dream inquiry for locating treasure within the broader world of Jewish economic magic, Harari offers a revised edition of this dream inquiry with commentary. In addition, through a comparison of the invocation of Metatron in *Sedaqah*’s dream inquiry with others in the magic of the Cairo Genizah, Harari concludes that the practitioner did not use a handbook, but operated on the basis of memory. Harari reminds us that the practitioner’s scribal habits would not have mattered as much to *Sedaqah* as the treasure Metatron would help him locate with the help of this dream inquiry.

Staying with the Cairo Genizah, Gideon Bohak examines magical recipes found on vertical parchment scrolls (*rotuli*) in his “The Magical Rotuli from the Cairo Genizah.” Bohak surveys the known magical *rotuli* (often stitched together), with a particular emphasis on their codicological and scribal features and their contents. Pointing to their “mixture of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic and Hebrew,” their lack of Arabisms, and their use of Greek loanwords and transliterations of Greek phrases, Bohak suggests that many of the magical *rotuli* belong to the earlier strata of the Cairo Genizah, some of which may even pre-date “Genizah times.” Turning to a *rotulus*, which he argues derives much

of its material from early Palestinian recipes—Bodleian Heb. a3.31—Bohak highlights the frequency of aggressive spells that incorporate “daring” rituals (one, for instance, advocates that the magician use his own urine). Since the “daring” type of aggressive magic was later abandoned by Jewish magicians, Bohak concludes that these recipes provide important evidence for the early aggressive magical tradition of the Jews in Palestine and Cairo.

Alexander Fodor’s “An Arabic Version of ‘The Sword of Moses’” concludes the volume. Here, Fodor examines a Christian Arabic manuscript titled *Sifr Ādam* (“The Book of Adam”) that actually contains versions of *Sefer ha-Razim* and *Harba de Moshe* (“The Sword of Moses”)—though Moses is not mentioned as the recipient of the sword’s revelation—and another text with strong ties to the *Sefer ha-Yashar* (“The Book of Righteousness”). Fodor focuses on the manuscript’s implications for the sources, transmission, and social context of the Arabic version of the *Harba de Moshe*. Through a close reading of several of the manuscript’s recipes, he concludes that the Arabic “Sword” reflects a rich and complex transmission and redaction history, which included, on the one hand, scribes steeped in Hekhalot mysticism and, on the other hand, the scribe behind the Arabic manuscript (a Coptic Christian?), whose recast version of the *Harba* is largely bereft of specifically Jewish associations.

All the chapters are written by established scholars in their respective fields, and the volume as a whole will be of great use to specialists. It will provide a solid foundation for future work on the development of aggressive, apotropaic, and divinatory practices in antiquity, especially as they relate to Hebrew and Aramaic communities. And the consistent emphasis on the scribal and scholarly context of “magical” materials should serve as a model for future studies.

Nevertheless, this volume has shortcomings. While the editors have provided a useful subject index at the end of the volume, it would have been helpful had they also included a general bibliography, especially as only a few authors (Quack, Faraone, Shaked, Levene, von Stuckrad, and Fodor) provide bibliographies or works cited at the end of their chapters.

Further, despite its value for specialists in ancient ritual texts and practices, the volume will be of limited use to nonspecialists. Several chapters are unduly complicated, with extended and sometimes digressive analyses. Also, the frequent use of undefined disciplinary jargon will diminish the volume’s usefulness for those with only an introductory understanding of ancient “magic.”

More important, the book suffers from some glaring lacunae in terms of content. There is no chapter devoted to the Greek and Coptic “magical” devices from “Christian” Egypt; these artifacts provide an interesting test case

for developments and shifts in ritual idioms and institutions. Such an analysis would have been a useful complement to the essays on earlier Egyptian “magical” practice offered by Quack and Dieleman. In addition, there is no chapter on accusations of “magic.” This book would have been an ideal venue for an analysis of continuities and innovations in the construction and marginalization of “magicians” and their devices.

Finally, the chapters reflect varying degrees of sophistication in the use of key terms and concepts. This is particularly true of “magic.” Faraone, for instance, is well aware of the problems associated with drawing fixed distinctions between ancient “magic” and “medicine.” Yet Gruenwald and Graf—albeit to a lesser extent—tend to conflate ancient and nineteenth-century views of “magic.” As a result, their chapters rely on the usefulness of “magic” as an inherently meaningful category and treat it as completely separate from other aspects of ancient social life. This is unfortunate, since there is a considerable body of scholarship that has challenged the heuristic utility of “magic” as a descriptive category, both in isolation and in dialogue with other domains of social existence (e.g., “religion” and “science”). David E. Aune’s 2007 “Magic in Early Christianity and Its Ancient Mediterranean Context” is especially helpful on this front. All in all, with the notable exceptions of Faraone’s challenge to the magic–medicine dichotomy and von Stuckrad’s treatment of “divination,” “paganism,” “Judaism,” and “Christianity” as contested categories, the volume is rather light on critical approaches to the discipline’s inherited terminology.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, I highly recommend this volume to any specialist who can afford the \$176.00 price tag.

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#### NOTES

1. See, for instance, Karl Preisendanz, ed., *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechen Zauber-papyri*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (Stuttgart: K. G. Saur Verlag GmbH, 1973–74); Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–92); Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Magische Tete aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994–99).

2. See, for example, Hans D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994).



3. The number of monographs, edited volumes, and essays on ancient magic written over the past few decades is immense. Some of the more influential studies include (in chronological order): Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Marvin W. Meyer and Paul A. Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).