incontestablement antique; mais Labarre n'hésite pas. Le manque de données exactes archéologiques et topographiques que révèle cet exemple diminue gravement la valeur de l'oeuvre de Labarre. À fin de compte, il n'existe encore une histoire systématique de l'île verte et florissante, célèbre et érudite, qu'est la Lesbos.

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MAGIC IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. By FRITZ GRAF. Tr. FRANKLIN PHILIP. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1997. Pp. 313.

THE ORIGINAL TITLE of Graf's fine book, published by Les Belles Lettres in 1994, was less pithy but more precise: *Idéologie et pratique de la magie dans l'antiquité grèco-romaine.* The author draws upon a wide range of evidence, including papyri recipes, curse tablets, "voodoo dolls," trials of alleged magicians, and observations made by ancient authors, to reconsider, as a "historian of religion," the changing forms and functions of magic in Greece and Rome. Clearly written, scholarly, and at times stimulatingly controversial, the book should appeal to a variety of readers, from those approaching the subject for the first time to experts in the field.

Working within Christian assumptions of magic's essentially "primitive" and "diabolical" nature (Wilamowitz, for example, called it a "savage and phantasmagorical superstition"),[1] Classical scholars were slow to appreciate magic's importance to the "enlightened" cultures of Greece and Rome. That situation changed only after anthropologists and ethnologists like Frazer, Malinowski, and Tylor began a searching inquiry into magic in general,[2] which in turn inspired an essentially modern debate about understanding foreign cultures and the hermeneutics of ritual, including those of magic. Like many contemporary classicists, Graf is well versed in this debate. In Chapter One ("Introduction") he tackles the question how to *define* magic in the first place. He will do so according to the sense the ancients themselves gave it, rather than with reference to modern theory. But to *interpret* its various rituals and functions he does in fact throughout the book apply, prudently, such theoretical paradigms as Van Gennep's account of rites of passage (relevant to becoming a magician) as a sequence of separation, marginality, and integration, and Mauss's view of magic itself as a form of marginality created by public opinion to serve societal needs.[3]

Graf charts in impressive detail significant periods in the history of Graeco-Roman magic—especially Classical and Hellenistic Greece and Republican and Imperial Rome—, but he insists on a number of enduring elements. First, while magic always included spells for harming enemies and while Plato and others saw it as a form of atheism dangerous to the social order, it became emphatically and essentially a "gift of the gods" (92–96), its prayerful rituals a quest for, in Apuleius' words, *communio loquendi* with the deity and thence for true knowledge.[4] And just as in civic religion the collective pantheon yielded in time to a hierarchy of divinities, so magic came to recognize two levels—the

[1] U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (Berlin 1931) 11.

[2] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London 1890); B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science, and Religion* (New York 1925); E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (New York 1958).

[3] A. van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage* (Paris 1909); M. Mauss, "Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie," *Année Sociologique* 7 (1902–03) 1–146.

[4] Apul. *Apol.* 266.

magician encounters the Supreme God (known by various names) in order to request the aid of a lower-level demonic assistant. In sum, magic is an "autonomous domain within religious practice" (30). Its rites particularly resemble those of mystery religions (96–117). Where they differ is in form—they are mostly individual rather than collective—and in intention—their ends are personal and material rather than social.

Second, while the magician may "constrain" the gods in a variety of ways, outside of certain literary portrayals such constraint is, *pace* "intellectual Frazer" and "religious Father Festugière" (228), neither fundamental nor even absolute:[5] the magician may coerce his demon, and such minor deities as Kore and Aphrodite, but never the Supreme God. Third, again *pace* Frazer, magic, with its emphasis on *similia similibus* (the correspondence, say, between a wax image and an intended victim), does not thereby work "sympathetically" by actual identity, but symbolically, by analogy between the image as sign and the victim as signified. Fourth, magic rites, and indeed trials of alleged magicians, are, like all ritual, kinds of "performative" theatre: the former enable the magician to express his or her individual marginality, the latter—the trial of Apuleius is among the best documented and most illuminating (65–88)—offer the group a way to expel such dangerously antisocial marginality, or to integrate it.

An area Graf regards as much under-researched (he urges specialists in literature to do more) is that of depictions of magic in literary fictions. He himself tackles the subject in Chapter Six, "Literary Representations of Magic," where he compares the evidence of Theocritus' *Second Idyll* and Lucan's *Bellum Civile* with that of the papyri. Graf concludes that Simaetha's spell in Theocritus is a nonsensical jumble, reflecting popular ignorance about empirical magic, that could have never worked in practice; the poet and his cultured contemporaries react with merely amused contempt to Hellenistic magic. Erichtho's necromantic rite, on the other hand, might just work. But her magic is a radical perversion of civic religion; Lucan thus portrays Sextus Pompey, Gnaius' "unworthy son" who prefers Thessalian necromancy to pious oracles, as a defiler of religion, and as such a perverter of the Republic.

Inevitably, not all of Graf's conclusions command assent in every degree. For example, I find his insistence on the purely symbolic nature of *similia similibus* a mite too rational and unnecessarily exclusive; his own account of all the eerie *reversals* that characterize magic (229–232), including its nocturnal rather than daytime ceremony, is a pointer to the disturbing mystery at its core. But those conclusions are invariably well informed and skilfully argued, often convincing, and always a pleasure to wrestle with.

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ROMAN STATUTES. Edited by M. H. CRAWFORD. London: Institute of Classical Studies (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supp. 64). 2 vols. 1996. Pp. xxviii, 877, 13 plates, 14 figures.

THE TWO VOLUMES of *Roman Statutes* (= *RS*) present sixty-five Roman *leges*, statutes enacted by the popular assemblies, and *rogationes* (bills). The first volume contains texts of which the actual wording survives in inscriptions from the Roman period, the second, slightly slimmer one, texts for which we depend on literary sources. This means that a large

[5] A.-J. Festugière, *L'Idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Evangile* (Paris 1932).