APPENDIX: MAGIC AND RELIGION

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Over a long period of time, social anthropologists have now been debating the question whether there is a difference between magic and religion, and if so, how magic should be defined. Given the greatly increased attention to magic among classicists in recent years, it is hardly surprising that this debate has now finally reached the ancient world as well. In an important article, our com-patriot Henk Versnel has recently argued that 'rejection of the word "magic" will soon turn out to be unworkable' and that 'it would be utterly unpractical to completely eliminate religion as one of the obvious models of contrast'. He even argues that

'the question whether distinctions should be drawn between magic and religion or magic and other features within religion is (...) of minor importance. What is important is to make a distinction between magic and non-magic, and it will be impossible - and, if possible, utterly impractical - to completely eliminate religion as one obvious model of contrast'.

Versnel is a declared follower of the etic approach, that is, the use of concepts developed by us, not by the actors, in order to have a common platform for communication and discussion. This is undoubtedly the most satisfactory position from a scholarly point of view and in this respect I wholeheartedly agree with him. Yet, in order to be workable, the etic definition of a concept should

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1 For short surveys with bibliography see most recently Graf, Magic, pp. 14-18; Braarvig, 'Magic'; Thomassen, 'Is Magic a Subclass'; Schulz, Magic, pp. 372-378.
2 In addition to those already mentioned in note 1, see also the following works: Merkelbach and Toti, Abrasax (the last two volumes by Merkelbach alone); Daniel and Maltomini, Supplementum Magicum; Bemand, Sorciers grecs; Faraone and Obbink, Magika Hiera; Betz, The Greek Magical Papyri; Gager, Curse Tablets; Kotansky, Greek Magical Amulets; Meyer and Smith, Ancient Christian Magic; Brashear, 'The Greek Magical Papyri'; Meyer and Mirecki, Ancient Magic; Voutiras, Dionysophontos Gamos; Schafer and Kippenberg, Envisioning Magic; Faraone, Ancient Greek Love Magic; Moreau and Turpin, La magie; Dickie, Magic and Magicians.
3 Versnel, 'Some Reflections', pp. 177, 187 (with extensive bibliography).
4 For interesting ideas on the problem, see Boudewijnse, 'Fieldwork'.
always be as close as possible to the actors’ point of view: if not, it will soon cease to be a useful definition. In this respect questions may arise about Versnel’s position that we need religion as an obvious model of contrast to magic. I would like to make five observations which throw doubt on his (but not only his!) position.

First, attention in the debate is always focused on the definition of magic, as if the meaning of religion is generally agreed upon. In fact, religion was not yet conceptualized as a separate sphere of life in the Greco-Roman period and the term ‘religion’ only received its modern meaning in the immediate post-Reformation era, when the first contours of a separate religious sphere started to become visible.

Secondly, the example of religion suggests that when analysing a concept we must also be sensitive to its semantic development. Here, we may point to the relatively late appearance of the word ‘magic’ in Western Europe. Linguistically, English magyk long existed alongside magique, which derived from Old French art magique. Modern French magie replaces magique only in the sixteenth century, German Magie is not to be found before the seventeenth century and Danish magi appears even only in the eighteenth century. Evidently, in the period stretching from the later Middle Ages to the beginning of the early modern era a need was felt for a new term, although the reasons for this development are still largely obscure. Moreover, magic was not a static concept, as we can already see in Antiquity: the Renaissance invented the idea of a magia naturalis, the Romantics considered magic an art which could help ‘das Gottliche zu produzieren’, and modem witches seem to have even abolished the traditional distinction between religion and magic. To oppose magic to religion, then, is to use two terms and concepts, which did not exist in Antiquity, but are both the product of late- and post-medieval Europe.

5 See most recently Bremrner ‘‘Religion’’, pp. 11-12; Smith, ‘Religion’.
6 See, respectively, The Oxford English Dictionary IX, p. 185; Wagner, ‘Sorcier’ et "magicien"; Wartburg, Franzosisches etymologisches Worterbuch VI.I. s.v. magia, magicus; Grimm, Deutsches Worterbuch VI. p. 1445; Ordbog over det Danske sprog III, p. 771.
7 Goldammer, Der gottliege Magier, p. 15: ‘Der Begriff, über den entstehungsgeschichtlich eigentlich wenig bekannt ist’.
8 See the surveys of the developments by Gordon, ‘Imagining Greek and Roman Magic’, and Graf, ‘Une histoire magique’.
9 For the semantic development, note Henrichs, ‘Scientia magica’; Goldammer, ‘Magie’ (inadequate); Zambelli, L’ambigua natura della magia.
10 As observed by Hutton, The Triumph of the Moon, p. 394.
11 Fowler, ‘Greek Magic’, stresses that the Greeks do not define the concept of magic in any clear way, let alone oppose it to religion.
Thirdly, we should take into consideration that the ancients themselves did not oppose magic to religion. This becomes apparent when we look at both pagan and Christian positions. In his Apology (26.6), Apuleius first states that magiam (...) artem esse dis immortalibus acceptam, but he knows, of course, that this is the favourable interpretation of magia. He therefore continues that more vulgari a magus is somebody who, through a communio loquendi cum deis immortalibus, effects everythmg he wants through 'an incredible power of incantations' (incredibili quadam vi cantaminum). One cannot fail to note that Apuleius does not contrast magic with religion, and neither do the early Church fathers. Admittedly, Justin points out that, unlike Christians, Jews and pagans exorcise with drugs, incense and incantations; Irenaeus stresses the absence of incantations and any other 'wicked, curious art' in Christian miracles, and Origen denies that Christians use incantations, names of demons or magical formulas. Yet none of them formulates the debate in terms of an opposition magic-religion.\(^{12}\)

Fourthly, in these texts the contrast is not between magic and religion tout court, but between magic and normative religious practice. Evidently, magic was construed dialectically in terms of what it was not.\(^{13}\) Does that mean that magic is an unworkable concept? Not necessarily so. When we look at the most frequently noted oppositions between what is normally called magic and religion, such as secretlpublic, night/day, individual/collective, anti-social/social, voces magicae/understandable language, coercive manipulation/suppli- cative negotiation, negative gods/positive gods and so on,\(^{14}\) we cannot fail to note that the positive characteristics are approved of by most religions, just as the negative ones are generally disapproved of or negatively valued. Evidently, the structure of most religions is similar enough to share a common number of negative practices and values – dual classification and inversion being very widely spread ordering principles of ancient and, still, modern cosmology.\(^{15}\)

This 'family resemblance', to use the well-known Wittgensteinian term, between religions enables us to continue using magic as a concept with a recognisable referent to reality. However, at the same time we must always remain aware of the fact that cultures rarely agree in detail as to what constitutes magic. That is already clear in Antiquity where magic only becomes

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\(^{12}\) Justin, I Apology 2.6, Dialogue with Tryphon 69, 85; Irenaeus, Adversus haereses 2.32.5; Origen, Contra Celsum 1.6, 60 and 6.40; Remus, Pagan-Christian Conflict, pp. 52-72; Heintz, Simon “Le Magicien”.

\(^{13}\) I vary here an observation by Clark, Thinking with Demons, p. 9, on the construction of witchcraft.


\(^{15}\) See the interesting discussion of Clark, Thinking with Demons, pp. 31-79.
thematized in later Classical Greece, whereas the later Roman Empire seems obsessed with it.\(^{16}\)

Fifthly and finally, it is usually neglected that the moment of birth of the opposition magic-religion is only recent and can be established fairly exactly. Indeed, James George Frazer himself, the author of the famous *Golden Bough*, who did most to popularise the opposition, tells us in the preface to the second edition of his *opus magnum* (1900), which had been published with the new subtitle *A study in magic and religion*, that he had derived the opposition from Sir Alfred Lyall (1858-1936) and Frank Jevons (1835-1911),\(^{17}\) the first an able colonial administrator in India and the second an average classicist and historian of religion in Durham. Lyall had opposed native Indian witchcraft to the 'religion of civilization' and Jevons had contrasted the race 'less civilised' with magic to the race 'more civilised' with religion.\(^{18}\)

Now since the *Hippocratic On the Sacred Disease* the contrast between superstitious and 'authentic' religious practice has become a virtually fixed aspect of discussions of religion until the time of Frazer. However, the terms of this debate did not always remain the same. Whereas in Antiquity the opposite of accepted religious practice could be expressed with the terms desidaidmonia, mageia/magia or superstitio, the latter term became the ruling concept in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, and it remained so until the nineteenth century.\(^{19}\) Frazer changed this situation in two aspects. He not only subsumed the beliefs and practices which used to be called superstition under the category 'magic', but he also separated this category from religion in time. Whereas earlier generations of scholars had considered superstition a part, albeit a misguided one, of religion, Frazer suggested that magic had actually once preceded 'authentic' religion.\(^{20}\)

Frazer's temporal distinction between magic and religion was immediately criticised by folklorists and soon abandoned, but his use of the term magic became an instant scholarly success among anthropologists.\(^{21}\) Due to the more recent technological developments, we can now much easier gauge


\(^{17}\) See also Frazer, *The Magic Art* 1.1, pp. 224-225.

\(^{18}\) Lyall, * Asiatic Studies* 1, pp. 99-130, who also propagated the view that magic is a primitive stage of science; Jevons, *Introduction*, pp. 36-37.


\(^{20}\) The same thought seems to have occurred to Tylor, cf. Hanegraaff, *The Emergence*, p. 262; note also Orsucchi, 'La scoperta'.

\(^{21}\) For the reception of the second edition see Ackerman, *J.G. Frazer*, pp. 164-179; for the success of the term magic among anthropologists, *Stocking, After Tylor*, p. 150.
the nature of Frazer's influence in this respect. As I first showed in my discussion of the term 'ritual',\textsuperscript{22} the computerisation of the catalogues of the university libraries enables us to search for certain key terms in the titles of books. It is illustrative of Frazer's new approach that books with both terms 'magic' and 'religion' in their title are not attested before the year 1900,\textsuperscript{23} but virtually immediately become a normal feature of social anthropology and the history of religion after Frazer's work,\textsuperscript{24} and they have remained thus ever since — witness the title of Keith Thomas's classic \textit{Religion and the Decline of Magic} (1971). In fact, the very first book which uses the terms in the main title is \textit{Magic and Religion} by Andrew Lang (1844-1912) of, note the year, 1901 — a clear indication of the interest Frazer had evoked with his new categorisation.\textsuperscript{25} The opposition, then, is a typical product of the Victorian middle-classes with their strong need for positive self-definition against the colonial subjects abroad and the peasants at home.\textsuperscript{26} It has no place in a discussion of magic in \textit{Antiquity} and the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{27}

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\textit{Die Entdeckung}, pp. 120-142.
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\textit{The Invention}; Kuklick, \textit{The savage within}, pp. 75-118; Kippenberg,\textsuperscript{26} \textit{The Invention}; Kuklick, \textit{The savage within}, pp. 75-118; Kippenberg, Die \textit{Entdeckung}, pp. 120-142.
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\textit{The Birth of the Term Magic}. For information and comments I would like to thank Bob Fowler (who also corrected the English), Sigurd Hjelde, Goffe Jensma, Peter van Minnen and Herman Roodenburg.
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\textsuperscript{22} Bremmer, "'Religion'". pp. 22-23.
\textsuperscript{23} As my colleague Lourens van den Bosch points out to me, the term 'magic' is also still absent from the indices of the books of Max Müller (1823-1900), the most famous historian of religion of the second half of the nineteenth century.
\textsuperscript{25} Lang, \textit{Magic and Religion}, with already a devastating critique of the categorisation (pp. 46-75).
\textsuperscript{26} Cf. Kuper, \textit{The Invention}; Kuklick, \textit{The savage within}, pp. 75-118; Kippenberg, Die \textit{Entdeckung}, pp. 120-142.
\textsuperscript{27} This is the updated version of the original Appendix to my 'The Birth of the Term Magic'. For information and comments I would like to thank Bob Fowler (who also corrected the English), Sigurd Hjelde, Goffe Jensma, Peter van Minnen and Herman Roodenburg.
The information in this section pertains to the historical context of the mass production of a particular product. It highlights the advancements in technology and the economic impact it had on the local community. The data collected from various sources, including interviews with industry experts and historical documents, is presented in a comprehensive manner. The analysis of the data shows a significant increase in productivity and efficiency, which can be attributed to the implementation of new manufacturing techniques. The case study also discusses the challenges faced during the production process and the strategies adopted to overcome them. This section serves as a valuable resource for understanding the evolution of the industry and its contribution to the economy.