

ANDREW DURDIN
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EDUCATION:

2009–Present (dissertation completed in Sumer 2017; to be conferred Autumn 2017)

University of Chicago, Divinity School

PhD, History of Religions

Advisor: Bruce Lincoln

Dissertation: *Redescribing “Magic”: Discourse, Alterity, and Religion in the Roman Empire*

2007–2009

University of Chicago, Divinity School

M.A., Divinity

2005–2007

Georgia State University, Department of Religious Studies

M.A., Religious Studies

1999–2003

Georgia State University, Department of Philosophy

B.A., Philosophy; Minor: Religious Studies

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Scholars have roundly criticized “magic” as a category for academic analysis in the social sciences and humanities for more than a century. Yet despite these persistent criticisms, and especially for scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world, magic still enjoys wide currency and has even received renewed interest over the past thirty years. My dissertation explores how and why scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world have continued to use this category in the face of a long tradition of criticism and offers a critical reassessment of sources that have often been construed as evidence in historical articulations of Greco-Roman magic. Specifically, I turn to the Latin literary sources written by the Roman elite in the Late Republic and early Principate and contextualize their ideological work without appeal to magic as a substantive category. I argue that such texts can be more usefully read as an indication of the ruling class’s broader preoccupation with construing, negotiating, and contesting religious alterity in the context of acquiring and managing a Mediterranean empire. The Latin term *magia* and its cognates thus became simply one of several indices with which Roman intellectuals dealt with the cultural diversity fostered by Rome’s own imperial ambitions.

Chair: Bruce Lincoln

Readers: Clifford Ando, Christopher Faraone

DOCTORAL EXAMINATIONS:

Religions of Ancient Rome (examiners: Clifford Ando and Bruce Lincoln)

Ancient Christianity, to 600 CE (examiner: Margaret Mitchell)

Classical Theories of Religion (examiner: Christian Wedemeyer);

Philosophy of Religions: Continental Philosophy of Religions in the Twentieth Century (examiner: Ryan Coyne)

AWARDS/HONORS

Mellon Humanities Dissertation Fellowship, 2015-2016

Martin Marty Dissertation Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2014-2015

Alma Wilson Teaching Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2014-2015
(for the course “The Ancient Romans and their ‘religion’”)

Jerald Brauer Seminar participant, University of Chicago, 2012

Doolittle-Harrison Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2011

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Autumn 2016–Present

Lecturer in the Humanities for “Religions of the World” (HUM 201, -01, -02), University of Michigan-Dearborn, Department of Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts

Spring 2015

Writing Lector for “Academic and Professional Writing” (ENGL 13000), University of Chicago, Writing Program

Winter 2015

Instructor of Record for “The Ancient Romans and their ‘religion’” (RLST 22311/CLCV 22314), University of Chicago, Undergraduate Program in Religious Studies

Autumn 2014

Teaching Assistant for “Classic Theories of Religion” (HREL 32900, instructor of record Bruce Lincoln), University of Chicago Divinity School

Autumn 2014

Writing Intern for “Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities,” section 4 (HUMA 11500, instructor of record Bart Schultz), University of Chicago Humanities Core

Winter 2014
Writing Tutor, University of Chicago, Writing Program

Winter 2014
Writing Lector for “Academic and Professional Writing” (ENGL 13000), University of Chicago, Writing Program

Autumn 2011
Teaching Assistant for “Classical Theories of Religion” (HREL 32900, instructor of record Christian Wedemeyer), University of Chicago Divinity School

Autumn 2006-Spring 2007
Instructor of record for “Critical Thinking” (PHIL 1010), Georgia State University, Department of and Philosophy

PUBLICATIONS

“On Z-factors and Empires: Reflections on Aaron Hughes’s essay on comparison” (Chapter 14) in *Method Today: Redescribing Approaches to the Study of Religion*, edited by Brad Stoddard, forthcoming with Equinox Publishing Ltd. (<https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/method-today/>)

Review of John Scheid’s *The Gods, the State, and the Individual: Reflections on Civic Religion in Rome*. Translated and with a foreword by Clifford Ando (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) in *History of Religions*, August 2017, Vol. 57, No. 1, 93-96.

“The Spaces Between, or When the Choices are Hard,” as part of “Forum: Crafting the Introductory Course in Religious Studies,” Russell McCutcheon et al. in *Teaching Theology & Religion*, Volume 19, Issue 1, January 2016, p. 78-98.

Review of Jörg Rüpke’s *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) in *Journal of Religion*, July 2014, Vol. 94 No. 3, 400-402.

OTHER WRITINGS

“From Critiquing Ancient Religion to Imagining No Religion,” invited post for “Words and Things,” a University of Alabama Religious Studies blog series engaging Brett Nongbri’s *Before Religion*, February 2017 (<https://religion.ua.edu/blog/2017/02/24/words-and-things-from-critiquing-ancient-religion-to-imagining-no-religion/>).

Comments on Thesis #7 of Russell McCutcheon’s “Theses on Professionalization,” in “Theses on Professionalization Series” for The Bulletin for the Study of Religion Blog, August 2015 (archived at <http://www.equinoxpub.com/blog/>).

“*Religio* without Religion: Brent Nongbri's *Before Religion* and the Age of Cicero,” on the University of Chicago Divinity School's Religion and Culture Web Forum (via the Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion), January 2015 (archived at <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/religion-and-culture-web-forum-0>).

In progress:

“The Material of the ‘Magical’ Evidence,” in progress for submission to *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*.

“Historicizing ‘Magic’: Pliny the Elder’s History of the *Magicae Vanitates* and the Cultural Anxieties of Empire,” in progress for submission to *Religion in the Roman Empire*.

PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS

“Pliny the Elder’s History of Magic and the Logic of Demonization,” delivered to the AAR Comparative Studies in Religion Section, “Theorizing Demonic Language in Mediterranean Religions,” at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, November 2016.

“The Ancient Romans and Their ‘religion’,” delivered to the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions and International Qu’ranic Studies Association SBL program unit “Teaching Ancient Mediterranean Religions from Rome to Islam,” at AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, November 2016

“Just Another Roman Intellectual: Magic, the Hellenistic occult, and the Utterly Ordinary Case of Nigidius Figulus,” delivered to the 2016 Florida State University Graduate Student Symposium.

“From Greece to Rome: On the Formation and Transmission of a Concept of ‘Magic’ in Antiquity,” delivered to the Religion and Human Sciences Workshop, University of Chicago, November 2015.

“Historicizing ‘Magic’: Pliny the Elder and Religious Anxiety in the Roman Empire,” delivered to the Magic/Science/Religion module “Ancient Contexts and Categories” of the Ways of Knowing: Graduate Conference on Religion at Harvard Divinity School, October 2015.

“A ‘Theological’ Discourse at Rome: on Empire, Knowledge, and Religion,” presented to the University of Chicago Theology and Religious Ethics Workshop, May 2015.

“*Religio* without Religion: Reflections on Recent Debates in Roman Religion and Religious Studies,” delivered to the AAR Cultural History of the Study of Religion Group and SBL Religious World of Late Antiquity Section, “Brent Nongbri’s *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (Yale University Press, 2013): Critical Engagement,” at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, November 2014.

“On Malinowski’s *Magic, Science, and Religion*,” presented to Bruce Lincoln’s “Classic Theories of Religion” class, Autumn 2014.

“Ritual Lost: The Abolition and Representation of the Sotah Ritual in M. Sotah 9:9,” presented to the History of Judaism section at the 2007 Southeastern Conference of the American Academy of Religion (SECSOR).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2011-2013

Editorial Assistant for the *History of Religions Journal*, University of Chicago Press

2010-2011

Research Assistant for Michael Sells, University of Chicago Divinity School

2009-2010

Research Assistant for Professor Richard Fox, University of Chicago Divinity School

AFFILIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

American Academy of Religion, member since 2006

Society for Biblical Literature, member since 2016

North American Association for the Study of Religion, member since 2016

Coordinator for Divinity Students Association History of Religions Student Association, University of Chicago, 2009-2013

Vice President of the Religious Studies Student Forum, Georgia State University, 2006-2007

LANGUAGES

Reading proficient: Latin, Attic Greek, French, and German

Some reading knowledge of Italian, Spanish, and Hebrew (two years of both modern and Biblical)

REFERENCES

Bruce Lincoln, Caroline E. Haskell Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago

(773) 702-5083

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Clifford Ando, David B. and Clara E. Stern Professor; Professor of Classics, History and Law and in the College at the University of Chicago

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(773) 702-8520
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Jeffrey Stackert, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible; Associate Faculty in the Department of Classics at the University of Chicago
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