WHAT IS MAGIC?

• **Magic**: It uses supernatural forces to potentially achieve any effect one desires.

Persons are able to use rituals, symbols, action, gestures, language, etc., to utilize mysterious and/or supernatural forces that don’t work by conventional science or laws of reality, to achieve virtually any effect imaginable.

The Magi of ancient Persia, who were so skilled and famed for their effectiveness that their name came to mean what we today call “magic.”
Spells, rituals, and powers were used by the powerless to try to gain control, change things, or solve problems, so they could have a better life.

There has always been a role for those who believe they can mediate realms with spirits, ward off evil, and stand on the threshold between the seen world of humans and the unseen realms of the spiritual.

This is why magic has preoccupied people for centuries and continues to do so.
8 SUBJECTS ABOUT
THE HISTORY OF MAGIC

1) What is Magic and what are the different main types?
   Ancient roots – Prehistory to 400 CE

2) Curse or Cure – 400 CE– 1500 CE

3) Scholars and Sabbats – 1500 – 1700

4) Secrecy and Ceremony – 1700 – 1900

5) Modern Magic – 1900 to the present

6) Ceremonial Magic – High Magic

7) Folk or Natural Magic – Low Magic

8) Performance Magic
MAGIC IS AS OLD AS HUMANKIND

Magic is a term that refers to non-scientific methods that are used to effect change in the physical world.

It ranges from:

▪ Trying to control ancient spirits
▪ Apply beliefs
▪ Do rituals
▪ Do actions to try to manipulate and change natural or supernatural beings and forces.
▪ It usually involves the use of an occult or secret body of knowledge.
MAGIC IS AS OLD AS HUMANKIND

It is the use of means (such as rituals) believed to have supernatural power over natural forces.

As soon as early people became aware of their environment, they believed it to be filled with spirits whose aid they invoked to control it.

Either directly through shamans—who they thought could travel into the spirit world—or through art.
Timeline Abbreviations

- Today instead of BC and AD we mostly use CE and BCE.
- It is more considerate of historians and people of all religions.
- BCE = Before the Common Era
- CE = Common Era
As societies became more advanced, they brought hierarchy and order to spiritual life. From around 4000 BCE, gods paralleled the rulers, priests, and nobility who held sway over Sumerian city-states or the ancient Egyptian kingdom.

Far more is known about these more official religions than ever can be about their Neolithic antecedents, because of the invention of writing.
THE 8 MAJOR SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

**Abjuration**: A collection of spells of a protective nature.

**Transmutation**: Formerly also known as alteration, these spells could transform the nature of the physical world or objects in it.

**Conjuration**: This group of spells created or transported people, energy or objects.

**Divination**: This school had fewer spells than others, but it allowed the caster to see things that they normally would not be able to.

**Enchantment**: An area of arcane study that specialized in manipulating the minds of others.
Evocation/Invocation: Although spells of this school seemingly created effects out of nothing, they drew raw power from out of the Weave.

Illusion: This school was almost a secret society prior to the Time of Troubles, even possessing their own language. Their spells were those that fooled the senses.

Necromancy: A dichotomous school that wielded positive energy into healing spells, and negative energy to effect both the dead and undead.

Universal: A small number of spells were not associated with any school but universally available, even to specialists.
The Evolutionary Tree of Myth & Religion

Version 1.0

Designed by Simon E. Davies

www.facebook.com/HumanOdyssey
Different Types of Magic

Elemental Magic

Aether Magic

Mortality Magic

Fire  Water  Earth  Air  Mental  Physical  Illusion  Alchemical  Death  Life
The Colours of Magik

- Earth, permanence, protection
- Darkness, removal, completion
- Light, initiation, creation
- Change, competition, sex
- Travel, divination, study
- Balance, encouragement, healing
- Nature, love, friendship
- Prosperity, thought, planning
- Imagination, creativity, sleep

(red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, brown, black & white)
### The 68 Main Types of Magic

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### Categories
- Divination
- Conjuration
ANCIENT ROOTS
PREHISTORY TO 400 CE

- PREHISTORIC MAGIC
- MESOPOTAMIAN MAGIC
- EGYPTIAN MAGIC - SPELLS FOR THE AFTERLIFE
- ANCIENT HEBREW MAGIC
- ANCIENT PERSIAN MAGIC
- ANCIENT GREEK MAGIC AND MYTH
- ROMAN MAGIC AND ASTROLOGY
- MYSTERY CULTS
- HEALING PLANTS
- ANCIENT CHINESE MAGIC
- CHINESE DIVINATION
- ANCIENT JAPANESE MAGIC
- ANCIENT HINDU MAGIC
- MAYAN MAGIC
PREHISTORIC MAGIC

It is thought that early people modeled figurines and painted animals on cave walls in the belief that doing so would give them magical power over their world.

In the ancient world, chaos and death were never very far away and the desire to stave these off, if only for a short period, meant that magic was ever-present.

As early as 95,000 years ago Neanderthals carefully buried a small child in a cave in Iraq, with a reverence that suggests belief in an afterlife.
The building, around 2500 BCE, of stone circles—such as Stonehenge.

The 3,000 Carnac stones stretch for more than a mile in Brittany, northwest France.

They were erected 6,000 years ago and are thought to have had some religious significance.

Both places were aligned to the sun’s rising or setting at certain times of year, which points to an increasingly sophisticated and religious world view.

With religion came magic.
PREHISTORIC MAGIC AND EARLY RELIGION

Early people learned to control the environment by inventing tools and using fire.

These skills gave them limited power but at the same time made them aware of just how vast the forces were that were out of humankind’s control.

To understand such mysteries as the sun’s rising and setting, birth and death, and the daily struggle to hunt for food for survival, our earliest ancestors conceived of spirit forces that they could invoke, to gain an advantage.
POWER AND SURVIVAL

Hunting was essential for the survival of early human communities.

From around 17,000 years ago people adorned barely accessible caves, such as Lascaux in France, with paintings of people hunting wild animals including stags, horses, bison, cattle, and bears.

These paintings may have been connected with rituals to make hunting expeditions more successful or have been intended to appease the animals’ spirits.
RIVER DEITY PROTECTING FISHERMEN

This is one of a series of more than 50 monumental sandstone heads set up in front of the hearths of a Neolithic fishing village called Lepenski Vir beside the Danube in Serbia.

The heads may represent guardian river deities.
MAGIC OF THE DEAD

Perhaps more potent than hunting, fertility, or the earth’s mysteries was the fear of death.

Formal burials have been found, dating from as early as 60,000 BCE, containing bones scattered with red ochre (a red clay mineral), possibly to sanctify the burial of the person.

Some burials also included flowers or necklaces to accompany the deceased into the next life.
ANIMISM AND TOTEMS

Prehistoric religion is thought to have been animistic—imbuing the natural world, including the landscape and the animals that inhabited it, with magical or supernatural powers.

A series of rock formations at Nyero in Uganda (possibly dating as far back as 12,000 years), became shrines.

They were adorned with geometric paintings and visited by early peoples to make offerings to the spirits believed to be there.
SPIRIT WORLD

Maintaining good relations with the many spirits who inhabited the world was vital for early peoples.

Shamans emerged to communicate with the spirits and try to influence them.

Shamans could seemingly transport themselves to the realms of the spirits through trances.

A headdress made of stag antlers found in the 11,000-year-old site of Star Carr in Yorkshire, may have been part of a shaman’s ritual attire.
AMBER

It is the fossilized resin of prehistoric pine trees and was treasured even in Neolithic times.

The ancient Greeks believed that it was the solidified rays of the sun.

With its distinctive color and translucency, it became highly prized.

It is electrostatic (it gives off sparks when rubbed), which also gave it a reputation for warding off danger.

It came to be regarded as a healing stone.

This fish-horse hybrid amber pendant comes from 5th-century BCE Italy.
MAGIC IN MESOPOTAMIA
MESOPOTAMIA

The Sumerians and Akkadians (including Assyrians and Babylonians) dominated Mesopotamia from the beginning of written history - 3100 BC to the fall of Babylon in 539 BC, when it was conquered by the Achaemenid Empire.

It is located within the Tigris–Euphrates river system, in the northern part of the Fertile Crescent.

Today, it occupies modern Iraq.
DEITIES IN MESOPOTAMIA

They had over 3,000 Deities which were in different forms of people.

They were thought to possess extraordinary powers and were often envisioned as being of tremendous physical size.

Deities were almost always depicted wearing horned caps and were also depicted wearing clothes with elaborate decorative gold and silver ornaments sewn into them.

The ancient Mesopotamians believed that their deities lived in Heaven, but that a god's statue was a physical embodiment of the god himself.

Akkadian cylinder seal dating to 2,300 BC, depicting the deities Inanna, Utu, Enki, and Isimud.
MESOPOTAMIAN MAGIC

Sumerians, Assyrians, and Babylonians all sought help from exorcists and omen-interpreters, to gain protection from bad supernatural entities and discover the future.

From the time of the Sumerians, who founded the first cities around 4,000 BCE, to that of the Babylonians over 3,000 years later, Mesopotamia was a land in which magic was part of everyday life.

Dating from around 700 BCE, this is the seventh of nine tablets. It contains chants for an ashipu (exorcist) to use to drive out witches who may have cursed a victim.
Beneath the official pantheon, including the likes of **Enlil**, the Assyrian sky god, and **Ea**, the god of wisdom, was a slayer of demons.

Such as **Lamashtu**, who threatened pregnant women, and **Namtaru**, the plague-demon, who needed to be mollified.

Natural phenomena such as floods and lightning, or epidemic diseases, were not understood, so people preferred supernatural explanations.

Disasters were believed to be caused by **mamitu (curses)** laid by witches, by victims committing offenses (sometimes unknowingly) against the gods, or through unintentionally ignoring divine signs.
This plaque depicts **Pazuzu**, king of the wind demons and lord of the southwest winds from the desert, which brought famine and locusts. It was crafted to provide protection from Pazuzu himself and to co-opt his aid in driving away another demon, **Lamashtu**.
Kings guarded against these occurrences by consulting temple priests, in particular Ashipu (exorcists), who performed magical rituals, and Baru, who interpreted omens.

Ordinary people also called on the services of Ashipu to cast protective spells and used amulets and enchanted figurines to dispel evil spirits.

Palace archives were stocked with collections of clay cuneiform tablets containing spells, incantations, and omens.

ASHIPU, BARU, ASU - DOCTORS IN MESOPOTAMIA.
INCANTATION BOWL

A very late example of the Mesopotamian magical tradition, this bowl, from the 5–7th centuries CE, contains an incantation in Aramaic and depicts a demon in the center.

Such bowls were often buried at the corners of rooms for protection.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1q8PJsNZBU 3 min

HUMAN-HEADED LION

This lamassu guarded a palace door.

The horned cap and wings indicate its divinity, and the belt its power.

The sculptor gave the figure five legs, so it looks as if it is standing firmly from the front but striding off from the side.
AMULETS WERE WORN TO WARD OFF EVIL

Wearing amulets was another part of protective magic, and they often portrayed the spirit they were supposed to ward off.

For instance, Pazuzu, the king of the wind demons, would be depicted as a creature with a bird’s chest and talons.
DOG FIGURINES

This terra-cotta fragment of Gula’s dog is part of a larger sculpture or temple decoration.

Gula, the healing goddess, was frequently depicted with a dog seated at her feet, and so clay or bronze dog figurines were used to invoke her aid.

Buried at thresholds or other places vulnerable to the infiltration of magic, they acted as mystical guard dogs, keeping out disease or other misfortunes.

They often had names carved on them, such as “Loud of bark” or “Catcher of the enemy,” to give them added potency.
Heka (magic) was already at the heart of Egyptian beliefs by 4,000 BCE.

Creator deities such as Nu (the watery abyss) were said to have used Heka to bring the world into existence from primordial chaos.

In doing so, they subdued the forces of chaos, but the forces constantly sought to return and could only be stopped by Heka.
GOD OF MAGIC
HEKA

The personification of heka (magic), is shown with Pharaoh Thutmose III, who ruled in the 15th century BCE, and the ram-headed Nile god Khnum in this relief from the great hall of Khnum’s temple at Esna.
The ancient Egyptians also believed in another form of magic power called Akhu, which was malign and closely associated with beings of the underworld.

To protect against Akhu magical practitioners such as priests, scribes in the “Houses of Life”—which held the manuscript collections of Egyptian temples—sunu (doctors), and sau (amulet-makers) employed Heka spells, rituals, and magical objects.
WAND OF POWER

Curved wands of hippopotamus ivory carved with protective symbols were believed to protect children and pregnant women.

This one has an inscription on the front reading “protection of day” and “protection of night.”

HIPPOPOTAMUS GODDESS TAWERET

The figure is shown on this steatite jar, was believed to aid women during childbirth.

The jar may have held a small papyrus with a magic spell to protect the mother and child.
The numerous gods of Egypt were the focal points of the nation's cultic rites and personal religious practices. They also played a part in the great mortuary rituals and in the Egyptian belief in posthumous eternal bliss.”

By Historian Margaret Bunson

The 1,500 different gods evolved from an animistic belief system to one which was highly anthropomorphic (human-like) and imbued with magic.
HUMAN AND SEMI-HUMAN FORMS OF SOME OF THE CHIEF EGYPTIAN DEITIES:

1) **Horus**, son of Osiris, a sky god closely connected with the king.

2) **Set**, enemy of Horus and Osiris, god of storms and disorder.

3) **Thoth**, a moon deity and god of writing, counting and wisdom.

4) **Khnum**, a ram god who shapes men and their ka’s on his potter's wheel.

5) **Hathor**, goddess of love, birth and death.

6) **Sobek**, the crocodile god, Lord of the Faiyum.

(The Faiyum Oasis was a region of ancient Egypt known for its fertility and the abundance of plant and animal life.)
7) **Ra**, the sun god in his many forms.

8) **Amon**, a creator god often linked with Ra.

9) **Ptah**, another creator god and the patron of craftsmen.

10) **Anubis**, god of mummification.

11) **Osiris**, god of agriculture and ruler of the dead.

12) **Isis**, wife of Osiris, mother of Horus and Mistress of Magic.
GODDESS MAAT AND GOD HORUS

The central value of the Egyptian culture was *ma'at* - harmony and balance.

It was represented by the goddess of the same name and her white ostrich feather.

To the ancient Egyptians, the king was a godlike being, closely identified with the all-powerful god Horus.
In ancient Egyptian belief, the **Ba** (the element of the soul that contained the personality of the deceased) faced a series of trials on its journey to the underworld.

Failing these trials would mean a second death—obliterating earthly memory of the deceased, who would wander as a ghost forever.

To avoid this second death, the Egyptians covered the walls of their tombs with **The Book of the Dead**, texts containing spells for the soul’s protection.
THOTH - HOLDER OF MAGIC SECRETS

Thoth, the god of wisdom and writing, was strongly associated with magic.

Depicted with the head of a baboon or an ibis (as here), he was said to have invented the hieroglyphic script, which he used to write 42 secret books of wisdom that were kept in temples.
EGYPTIAN EYE OF HORUS AMULETS,
PTOLEMAIC, 323-30 BC

The Eye of Horus or wedjat-eye is an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection, royal power and good health.

The eye is personified in the goddess Wadjet. It is also known as “The Eye of Ra.”

They were worn for everyday wear or tucked among mummy wrappings, as they were believed to be an effective source of protection and a symbol of strength and perfection.

TURQUOISE SCARABS
EGYPTIAN PROTECTIVE JEWELRY
AND AMULETS
It is also called the Wedjat eye or Udjat eye and is a concept and symbol in the ancient Egyptian religion that represents well-being, healing, and protection.

It derives from the mythical conflict between the god Set with his rival Horus.
The Eye of Horus symbol, a stylized eye with distinctive markings, was believed to have protective magical power and appeared frequently in ancient Egyptian art.

It was one of the most common motifs for amulets, remaining in use from the Old Kingdom (2686–2181 BCE), to the Roman period (30 BCE – 641 CE).

Today, many people use this symbol in their jewelry to protect themselves, against the ill will of those around them.

The eye of Horus, a magical and divine relic that allows to its owner to see beyond the visible, such as into the future.
Amulet from the tomb of Tutankhamun, 14th century BCE, incorporating the Eye of Horus beneath a disk and crescent symbol representing the moon.

Wedjat eyes on the sarcophagus of Irinimenpu, 20th to the 17th century BCE. They were marked there, so the deceased spirit, could look out.
The hamsa is a palm-shaped amulet popular throughout North Africa and in the Middle East, commonly used in jewelry and wall hangings.

Depicting the open right hand, the image is recognized and used as a sign of protection many times throughout history.

Traditionally, it is believed to provide defense against the evil eye.
ANCIENT HEBREW MAGIC
There are many references to the supernatural in the Torah (sometimes called the Tanakh or the Old Testament)

Although priests of the Jewish religion sanction most of these allusions, nods to earlier beliefs and ritual practices are also included, which are regarded as forbidden magic in Judaism.

HEAVEN-SENT INSIGHT

In this illustration, the prophet Ezekiel is flanked by an angel and shown in Heaven.
A BELIEF IN MIRACLES

A passage describes how the Prophet Elijah’s prayers were answered and rain fell to end a prolonged drought that had blighted the land of Israel.

The biblical patriarchs themselves performed miracles, acting as instruments of God’s power.

During the captivity of Israelites in Egypt, Moses’ brother Aaron engaged in a duel with the pharaoh’s magicians, who transformed their staffs into serpents. Aaron then changed his own rod into a larger snake, that devoured them all.
Prophecy was an authorized way of revealing the future.

References to telling the future are plentiful in the Old Testament:

- The consultation of seers to interpret dreams such as Joseph’s about lean cattle, which predicted famine in Egypt
- The shaking of arrows in a sacred quiver
- Official divination, probably by casting lots.

All of these divinatory activities were said to channel God’s will, rather than invoke magic to enforce action upon him.

This Italian fresco shows the **prophet Elijah** being taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, propelled skyward by a whirlwind.

As he departed the earth, **Elijah** dropped his cloak onto **Elisha**—a sign that he had chosen him to be his prophet successor.
ANCIENT PERSIAN MAGIC
ANCIENT PERSIAN MAGIC

In Persia, from around the 6th century BCE, Zoroastrianism developed under the Achaemenid empire.

Its prophet Zoroaster (also known as Zarathustra) urged his followers to worship the supreme God Ahura Mazda.

- The Magi were hereditary priests and specialists in Zoroastrian ritual who performed public and private ceremonies.
- Duties of the Magi included rituals which ensured the ruler’s well-being.
- Tending to the sacred flame—the symbol of Spenta Mainyu—which burned in fire temples throughout the empire.

This golden earring depicts Ahura Mazda, the supreme god of the Zoroastrian pantheon, surrounded by animals.
READY FOR RITUAL

Embossed on a sheet of gold, a Magus bears in one hand a cup of Haoma, a mild intoxicant used in Zoroastrian rites.

In the other hand he holds a barsom, the ritual bundle of twigs that represented the bounty of the vegetable kingdom.

TENDING THE FIRE ALTAR

This Magus recites a ritual while standing before a fire altar.

Making sure that the flame did not go out, was his most sacred duty.
The Magi or Magus were ancient Zoroastrian priests belonging to a tribe in North-western Iran known as the Medes.

The ancient Magi were well versed in matters of astronomy and astrology.

They were also healers who healed both, with the chanting of prayers, and mixing of various plants and herbs.

Thus, their powers were associated in the ancient world with magic.
Zoroaster, also called Zarathustra, was an ancient Persian prophet who founded the first world religion – Zoroastrianism.
From the Royal Ur Cemetery

A goat rampant in a tree. Ancient Ur (now Iraq, from about 2450 BCE.

A Gold covered ostrich egg, from the Royal Cemetery in Ur

“lizard-headed” figurine from 4500 BCE, burial at Ur.
FREDDIE MERCURY – AKA FARROKH BULSARA

It might come as a surprise to some that Freddie Mercury – the main vocalist with the Rock group Queen, was born Farrokh Bulsara.

He came from a Parsi family that had roots in India and he was a Zoroastrian by faith.

Like his ancestors, Freddie Mercury integrated into a new culture. He changed his name and became a Western pop icon.

Yet through it all, he remained immensely proud of his heritage.

“I think what his Zoroastrian faith gave him,” his sister Kashmira Cooke explained in 2014, “was to work hard, to persevere, and to follow your dreams.”
ANCIENT GREEK MAGIC
ANCIENT GREEK MAGIC

From Homer’s Iliad in the Bronze Age to the wider Hellenistic world of the early centuries CE, spell books, amulets, literary accounts, and inscriptions bear witness to the pervasiveness of mageia (magic).

As with many old belief systems, formal religion and magic were interlinked.

Divine influence suffused the whole world, and those empowered to communicate with the Gods included priests, philosophers, physicians, and poets.

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Circe, the sorceress daughter of Helios who was expert in magical herbs and potions and who helped Odysseus summon the ghosts from Hades.

CIRCE OFFERING THE CUP TO ODYSSEUS’

by John William Waterhouse, 1891, via Wikipedia
Animal sacrifice was a common way of appeasing the gods.

This 6th-century BCE votive panel from Pitsa in Greece, depicts celebrants offering a sheep to the nymphs to whom the area was sacred.
Formal religion in ancient Greece was a public affair of sacrifice and prayer, festivals and temples.

Magic was a more hidden and transgressive form of appeal to the gods, often used for personal gain or to affect others.

Although temple priests could perform ritual magic, personal requests were more often carried out by itinerant magicians and soothsayers, and others on the margins of society,
GREEK MAGICAL PAPYRI

This collection of texts was written in Egypt between the 1st century BCE and 4th century CE, and contains spells for love, divination, and healing.
TOOLS OF MAGIC

Certain stones were believed to possess magical powers, such as **hematite (bloodstone)**, thought to protect unborn babies, and **light-green jasper**, used to cure stomach infections.

These were set into amulets of wood, bone, or stone that the supplicant could wear.

Sailors about to embark on a hazardous voyage might have made use of a protective pendant depicting Poseidon (god of the sea), trident in hand and foot on a dolphin.
“MAGIC” GEM STONES

- Sodalite: Communication Self-Expression Truth
- Clear Quartz: Amplifying Energy Clarity
- Rose Quartz: Unconditional Love Emotional Healing Compassion
- Aventurine: Prosperity Well-Being Good Luck
- Howlite: Calming Composure Sleep
- Blue Goldstone: Inspiration Optimism Dreaming
- Rhodonite: Forgiveness Relationships Overcoming
- Fluorite: Renewal Harmony Energizing
- Red Jasper: Strength Honesty Stability
- Snowflake Obsidian: Spiritual Protection Transmutation Acceptance
- Citrine: Brightness Positive Energy Clearing
- Amethyst: Intuition Balance Higher Wisdom
- Pyrite: Shaking Success Money Magick
- Sunstone: Leadership Generosity Blessings
- Blue Aventurine: Hope Truthness
- Selenite: Purity Peace Enlightenment
- Amazonite: Confidence Self-Love Creative Expression
- Tiger’s Eye: Willpower Warrior’s Spirit Self-Motivation
- Black Tourmaline: Protection Boasting Security
- Carnelian: Passion Sexual Energy Creativity
- Prehnite: Psychic Awareness Self-Care Discernment
- Moss Agate: Contentment Connection with Nature Abundance
- Red Goldstone: Happiness Ingratitude Balance
- Garnet: Self-Esteem Victory Eternal Love
- Hematite: Courage Inner Strength Grounding
- Malachite: Wealth Beauty Individuality
- Dalmatian Stone: Loyalty Family Bonds Connection with Animals
- Angelite: Divine Love Gentleness Healing
- Moonstone: Intuition Sensuality Safe Travel
- Leopardskin Jasper: Adaptability Shamanic Journey Animal Magick
- Apatite: Energetic Clearing Psychic Attunement Authenticity
- Blue Calcite: Serenity Restoration Relieving Stress
- Lepidolite: Emotional Balance Stress Relief Spiritual Growth
- Lapis Lazuli: Psychic Vision Celestial Energy Nobility
- Serpentine: Hidden Mysteries Observation Instinct
- Black Onyx: Blocking Negative Energy Proliferation Determination
- Ruby Fuchsite: Integration Friendship Trust
- Mahogany Obsidian: Earth Energy Personal Power Integrity
- Labradorite: Awakening 3rd Eye Interdimensional Travel Innovation
- Unakite: Attraction Resolution Conflict Healing the Past
Originally an oral tradition, magic entered the written Greek record in the 6th century BCE. This was when ideas of magic were filtering westward from the Persian empire (and magicians were sometimes called “Chaldeans,” from a Persian province bordering Babylonia).

A large number of spells survive from the 4th century BCE, and there was another upsurge in the 1st century BCE, typified by the Greek Magical Papyri found in Egypt.

These cover many topics, including spells for healing, evading evil, and others.
CELESTIAL MECHANICS

A medieval pilgrim looking out from the sky (blue) to see the mechanics of the heavens (upper left). Cogs (yellow) can be seen in the left corner, with tracks that the Sun, moon and stars move along.

This is an example of the classical geocentric (Ptolemaic) worldview that dates back to Ancient Greek times.
DIVINATION IN ANCIENT GREECE

The ancient Greeks constantly sought to understand the will of the gods by reading signs in natural events, animals, or objects, or by attempting to communicate directly with them.

In a world where it seemed all too easy to anger the gods and for terrible punishments to befall mortals who did, Greeks were anxious to divine the intentions of the gods and learn how to win their favor.

In this fresco from a vase fragment, the god Apollo speaks to the priestess, the Pythia, at Delphi.
DIVINERS AND ORACLES

The practice of divination was first recorded in the *Iliad*, a poem about the Trojan War.

In it, the hero Achilles suggests consulting a “reader of dreams” to learn why the god Apollo was angry with the Greeks.

Closer contact with the gods could be obtained by interpreting the dreams of someone sleeping.
INTERPRETING DREAMS

Like almost all other cultures, some Romans firmly believed in the idea that dreams could forecast the future.

In the second century AD, Artemidorus of Daldis wrote a work named The Interpretation of Dreams, compiled in five books.

Some of the ways in which he interpreted the meaning of dreams are both specific and strange.
The most direct approach to the gods was through oracles (godly advice, usually via a priestess).

At shrines throughout the Greek world, priestesses delivered answers to a petitioner’s questions, often while in a divine frenzy (the mania that gave Greek divination its name, mantike).

The most famous shrine was at Delphi, where the Pythia, priestess of Apollo, gave advice while in an ecstasy inspired by fumes from an underground cave.
GREEK MYTHOLOGY

It is the set of myths about the gods, goddesses, heroes and rituals of Ancient Greece.

It was part of the religion in Ancient Greece.

These stories concern the origin and nature of the world, the lives and activities of deities, heroes, and mythological creatures, and the origins and significance of the ancient Greeks' own cult and ritual practices.

The most popular Greek Mythology figures include Greek Gods like Zeus, Poseidon & Apollo, Greek Goddesses like Aphrodite, Hera & Athena and Titans like Atlas.
SCENES FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY DEPICTED IN ANCIENT ART.

Left-to-right, top-to-bottom:

- The birth of Aphrodite
- A revel with Dionysus and Silenus
- Adonis playing the kithara for Aphrodite
- Heracles slaying the Lernaean Hydra
- The Colchian dragon regurgitating Jason in the presence of Athena
- Hermes with his mother Maia
- The Trojan Horse
- Odysseus's ship sailing past the island of the sirens
The carving is of an apotropaic, magical subject (as is common on stone amulets from this period): the Hecataion, a statue of Hecate, composed of three figures: the first, facing forward, is the only one that is completely visible.
ETRUSCAN GOLD BULLAE, DEPICTING ICARUS

Bullae were pendants worn by boys to ward off evil spirits and simultaneously proclaim their status as freeborn children.

The Romans adopted the practice of wearing bullae from the Etruscans. Both cultures saw children as especially vulnerable and in need of protection.
As well as having their own magical beliefs, the Romans inherited from the ancient Greeks a sense that magic was a means to gain agency over the gods.

Yet under Roman rule, the division between official religion and magic hardened, and there was outright persecution for practitioners of magic.

A lot of Roman magic was inherited from the people who lived in ancient Italy before them.
The Ephesia Grammata were a special type of amulet used by the Greeks and Romans.

They originated as a mysterious set of letters, with no grammatical meaning, allegedly engraved on the cult statue of Artemis of Ephesus.

People wore objects engraved with the letters to protect themselves from evil spirits as well as plagues.

Some athletes also had the letters stitched into their clothing or leather sandals to improve their chances of victory.
RARE ROMAN HERMANUBIS MAGIC AMULET, 2ND-3RD CENTURY AD

This is a carved hematite gemstone depicting Hermanubis in a tunic with the head of a jackal, like the Egyptian god Anubis.

He holds a caduceus and wears winged shoes like the Greek god Hermes.

In his other hand he holds a situla (bucket).

He is surrounded by letters with a star above.
Hundreds of techniques to foretell the future are recorded in ancient Roman documents. We know, for example, that sacrificing animals and trying to read the future by interpreting their entrails was practiced not only in ancient Rome, but also in many other cultures.
Everyone from the emperor down to the lowest slave, loved chariot racing.

Gambling was widespread at these races, with many Romans prepared to bet everything they owned, in the hopes of a big win.

Roman gamblers used magic to improve their chances by consulting with persons who did this, who set up a tent at each of the races.
Although Emperor Augustus expelled astrologers from Rome, he still put Capricorn (the ruling sign of his own horoscope) on coins as a symbol of his renewal of the Roman state (just as Capricorn marks the return of the sun following the winter solstice).
THE SIBYLLINE BOOKS

At times of crisis, Roman emperors consulted the Sibylline Books, a collection of predictions said to have been acquired in around 520 BCE from the Sibyl, a prophetess who lived in a cave at Cumae, near Naples.

The Books were well respected and well guarded, for a very long time.

They were kept in the temple of Capitoline Jupiter.

Michelangelo’s painting of the Erythraean Sibyl
The Mythology of Greece continued on, into Roman times, even though there was 1,000 years between the 2 civilizations!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Name</th>
<th>Roman Name</th>
<th>Divine Realm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aphrodite</td>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>Love, beauty, fertility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>Archery, music, prophecy, healing, light</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ares</td>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>War</td>
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<td>Artemis</td>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Hunting, the moon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athena</td>
<td>Minerva</td>
<td>Wisdom, war</td>
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<td>Demeter</td>
<td>Ceres</td>
<td>The harvest, grain, corn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dionysus</td>
<td>Bacchus</td>
<td>Wine, festivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eros</td>
<td>Cupid</td>
<td>Love, sexual desire</td>
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<td>Hades</td>
<td>Pluto</td>
<td>The underworld, the dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hephaestus</td>
<td>Vulcan</td>
<td>Fire, the forge, smithery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hera</td>
<td>Juno</td>
<td>Marriage, queen of immortals</td>
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<td>Hermes</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Messenger, commerce, science, doctors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hestia</td>
<td>Vesta</td>
<td>The hearth</td>
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<td>Pan</td>
<td>Pan</td>
<td>Wild beasts, the forest</td>
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<td>Persephone</td>
<td>Proserpine</td>
<td>Queen of the underworld</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poseidon</td>
<td>Neptune</td>
<td>The sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeus</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>Thunder, the heavens, king of immortals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASTROLOGY AND STUDYING THE STARS

Trying to predict events based on the position of the celestial bodies was also widely practiced in the Roman world.

Some Roman emperors, including Tiberius, Domitian, and Hadrian, believed in divination and astrology and even had some degree of training in these arts.

Some people believed in Astrology but others did not.
POPULAR MAGIC AND ASTROLOGY

Magic merged with philosophy and mystery cults as an interest in special belief systems grew among well-heeled Romans.

On the teeming streets of Rome, which had about 1 million inhabitants under the early empire in the 1st century CE, other forms of magic also thrived.
For every aristocratic scholar of the occult there were hundreds of female soothsayers who sold love potions and performed simple healing rituals as well as persons trained as astrologers.
Astrology straddled the divide between popular and aristocratic magic.

A special book on Egyptian astrology was written, which was at the root of many Roman practices.

Even the eminent astronomer Claudius Ptolemy pointed out that just as the tides were affected by the moon, so the motion of the planets would influence the behavior of people.
MYSTERY CULTS
Commoners of the ancient Roman world were denied participation in the public temple rituals, so many turned to mystery cults—unofficial religions that would accept them.

Mystery cults offered a direct relationship with the gods, the hope of a better afterlife, and social bonds.
Mystery cults thrived in part because the Romans were unusually open to foreign religions.

Their main quality was secrecy, both around initiation into the cult, which acted as a mystical rebirth, and its rituals.

**THE ELUSINIAN MYSTERIES**

It was the most desired cult which honored Demeter, the goddess of harvest, fertility, and cycles of life and death.

The Mysteries centered on the town of Eleusis, near Athens.

Their main ceremony was the annual eight-day festival during which would-be initiates engaged in a simulated descent into Hades (the underworld) through a dark wood, from which they were rescued by priests with torches.
THE GODDESS CYBELE

She is also called Magna Mater (great mother) and is shown on this votive plaque.

She holds a cymbal and has two lions with her, symbols of her links to the wildness of nature and the noisy frenzy of her worship.
CYBELE
THE ITALIAN CULT OF DIONYSUS, THE GREEK GOD OF WINE.

While drinking wine, they did teletai, rituals involving ecstatic dancing and singing, while carrying thyrsoi, fennel wands wrapped in ivy and topped with pinecones.

The cult’s activities particularly concerned the Roman authorities, who in 186 BCE tried to ban it.

Similar worries were expressed about the Cult of Magna Mater, for the Goddess Cybele.
PERCUSSION AND SACRIFICE

The cult of the Egyptian goddess Isis had its own temple in Rome by 65 CE.

Its priests valued ritual purity highly, shaving their heads and dressing in linen, although they, too, engaged in noisy rites using the sistrum, a percussion instrument.

Most widespread and secretive of all was the cult of Mithras.

Emerging in the 1st century CE, it derived indirectly from Persian beliefs.

Mithraism

It flourished throughout the Roman Empire, but it, along with all the other mystery cults, was suppressed when the Empire became Christian in the 4th century.
THE END
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