

MMW3, Section Co4

April 17, 2007

Research Log #2 and Five Research Questions

Topic #1: Magic in Rome from 1 to 500 CE

Burriss, Eli Edward. "Some Survivals of Magic in Roman Religion." *The Classical Journal* 24.2 (1928): 112-123. JSTOR. UC San Diego Lib. 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://jstor.org>>.

Burriss' article focuses on the continued influence of magic on Roman religious ideals even after the introduction of other belief systems, such as Christianity. This article discusses the different areas of Roman life that were touched by beliefs in magic. Burriss deals primarily with eight such areas, including rainmaking, sacrifices, and magic rites at places such as Carna and Tacita (114). If I choose to write about magic in Rome, this article would be of particular use because it provides numerous detailed examples of how magic affected people's everyday lives.

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*. Trans. Brian McNeil. Edinburgh: Clark, 2000.

Klauck discusses early Christian communities and the challenges (mainly magic and paganism) that they faced in the Roman Empire. First, Klauck discusses the efforts of Christian missionaries in places such as Egypt, Athens, and Rome. Later on, he discusses the following question: "Why is the name of Jesus adopted as a mere instrument of

magic?” This questions stems from the fact that magicians believed that Jesus’ name was a tool with which they could conjure up spirits (99). Additionally, Klauck writes that early Christians reached a decision regarding magic, saying that “one must bid magic farewell altogether, and keep a new Christian life pure in the face of all risks posed by magic,” despite its continued influence on society and its practices (102). This book would be useful in a paper on magic in Rome because it sheds light on how magic interacted with Christianity, a belief system that went from being despised to being favored by the Roman Empire.

Pharr, Clyde. “The Interdiction of Magic in Roman Law.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 63 (1932): 269-295.

Pharr discusses Roman laws that dealt specifically with magic and with those who practiced it. According to Pharr, the use of magic was prohibited by many cultures, including Rome, Egypt, and Greece. After Christianity became the prevalent religion of the Roman Empire, magic became even more illegal (269). Pharr provides many examples of Romans laws banning mystical and supernatural activities. For example, during the time of Augustus, prophesying the future was decreed to be unlawful (280). This law—and many others like it—gives insight into the mentality of Roman officials regarding magic and everything related to it. This article would be helpful if I were to write about magic in Rome because it gives a legal perspective on the subject that I was unable to find in other sources.

Topic #2: The Influence of Zoroastrianism on Other belief Systems (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism)

Barr, James. "The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53.2 (1985): 201-235. JSTOR. UC San Diego Lib. 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://jstor.org>>.

Barr discusses the similarities and differences among Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity. Instead of seeking out a definite answer as to whether or not these religions are interrelated, Barr just proposes various arguments for and against a proposed connection (202). To do this, he looks at a number of pieces of evidence, including those that are linguistic and historical in nature, and uses them to assess the validity of a range of hypotheses that have been advanced over the years. This article would be invaluable if I were to write my paper on Zoroastrianism because it provides many different arguments upon which I could expand as I tried to answer the interesting question of Zoroastrianism's influence on the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Stepaniants, Marietta. "The Encounter of Zoroastrianism with Islam." *Philosophy East and West* 52.2 (2002): 159-172. JSTOR. UC San Diego Lib. 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://jstor.org>>.

Stepaniants discusses the dynamic relationship between Zoroastrianism and Islam, which began in 632 after the death of the prophet Muhammad (159). Stepaniants explores the ways in which Zoroastrianism left a mark on Islam, and vice versa. In addition to

presenting her main view—that these two belief systems influenced each other in important ways—the author also mentions the opposing view: that Zoroastrian views did little to directly shape Muslim beliefs. This article would be a good source regarding Zoroastrianism’s impact on various belief systems during the first few centuries of the Common Era because it presents different ways in which one can use history to explain how many religions (Islam in particular) can be traced back to this Iranian belief system.

Research Questions:

1. What was magic’s biggest influence on the development of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire?

This question would be important to ask because it is apparent that belief in magic did not completely disappear as Christianity gained power in the Roman Empire. It would be interesting to see how something that Christians strongly opposed could affect their belief system.

2. Why did beliefs rooted in magic continue to prosper in Rome even after Christianity became the dominant religion of the empire?

There are many possible answers to this question that can be analyzed in the context of Rome and its history. I would like to see what kind of information research can provide with regard to this question, especially since the Romans had a long history

of worshipping many gods and employing divination (such as reading auspices) in their lives.

3. What was Zoroastrianism's most significant impact on the Judeo-Christian tradition?

Because it seems as if Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity have many things in common, I would be interested in exploring this question further to see which similarity among the three stands out the most. I would also like to analyze how (or why) these parallels developed in the first place.

4. Among Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, which was most impacted by Zoroastrian tradition?

Many scholars have proposed that these religions have all been affected by Zoroastrianism in some way. I would like to compare the four religions and see which one has the most in common with Zoroastrian beliefs.

5. Why was Zoroastrianism able to influence many of today's major world religions?

Among the sources I've found, scholars keep discussing how Zoroastrianism has affected today's major religions. Few of them, however, explain why this phenomenon occurred in the first place, and I would like to pursue further the origin of these connections.