

**The Nature and Development of Greek Magical Texts without Christian
Elements from Late Antique Egypt:
Tracing Continuity and Change**

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A thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa to fulfil the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts in Classical Studies

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the nature and evolution of Greek magical texts devoid of Christian elements from Late Antique Egypt, spanning the fourth to seventh centuries. As this type of analysis has not yet been conducted, our research takes as its point of departure a first checklist bringing together all the material. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the debate on magic, clarifies the criteria used for our checklist to classify a text as magical, and recommends the concept of ‘appropriation’ for the study of these texts. Building upon this, our second chapter focuses on establishing the criteria for our checklist. It defines the types of texts considered to be amulets and formularies and clarifies what we regard as Christian elements, ensuring that such texts are excluded from our study.

Finally, our third chapter utilises the earlier checklist by De Bruyn and Dijkstra, which collects all magical texts with Christian elements from Late Antique Egypt, allowing us to compare their findings with ours. This comparison allows us to better trace the developments of magical texts without Christian elements and observe whether the increasing establishment of Christianity in Late Antique Egypt led to notable changes in their usage patterns. On the basis of the data collected, our study demonstrates that similar to Egypt’s religious transformation as a whole, the usage of magical texts without Christian elements during this period is characterised by both change and continuity.

Acknowledgements

If someone had told me in high school that I would write a 91 page thesis and enjoyed it in the future, I would have never believed them. Yet here I am now, completing my Master's degree journey with a fully written thesis, made possible by the exceptional academic environment and supportive faculty at Ottawa.

First and foremost, I have to thank my supervisor, Jitse Dijkstra, for his kindness, motivation, understanding and patience with me as well as his unwavering support to provide me with new opportunities for both personal and academic growth. I also wish to extend my gratitude to the Philae team members—Nick Hedley, Sabrina Higgins, and Roxanne Bélanger Sarrazin—, as well as everyone at the Swiss house and Omnia M. Abdullah and the other Egyptian inspectors for their hospitality throughout my time in Aswan in March 2023.

This project would have also not been possible without the assistance of Dr. Theodore De Bruyn, who kindly allowed me to utilise his binder containing magical amulets that were not included in his study with Dr. Dijkstra, which proved very valuable for my research, and was available for answering some questions I had about the texts. I am also grateful to Dr. Greatrex for his interesting lectures, which deepened my appreciation for Late Antiquity and the Sasanian Empire. Additionally, I am thankful to Mme. Bussières for her helpful feedback on my first chapter and her patience and understanding during my class with her.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Brahm Kleinmann, Darian Totten, and Martin Sirois for helping me with my ancient language studies and for improving my research and writing skills during my time at McGill University. Of course, I am also deeply grateful to Dr. John Serrati, who has been a guiding mentor to me since my time at John Abbott College, helping me find my passion for the ancient world. Moreover, I am grateful to him and Prof. Bill Russell for instilling in me a lasting love for of Greece, Turkey, and Italy. Finally, I am eternally thankful to my friends for their encouragement throughout my Master's program, and

most importantly, to my parents, who have been a pillar of support throughout this journey and have given me the opportunity to pursue this degree.

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Abbreviations

In this study, ancient sources are abbreviated according to H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, with rev. suppl. (Oxford, 1996), P.G.W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1982), A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Paris, 1954), and G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968). For papyri, we adhere to the guidelines of papyri.info/docs/checklist, while for inscriptions we follow those of *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, available online at <https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/sego/>. For other reference works, we use S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, vol. 4 (Oxford, 2012), while journals are abbreviated according to J. Marouzeau (ed.), *L'année philologique: Bibliographie critique et analytique de l'antiquité gréco-latine* (Paris, 1924-). Not found in the aforementioned major reference works is the following abbreviation:

SAK *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*

General Introduction

Introduction: Religious Transformation in Late Antique Egypt

In sixth-century Egypt, despite Christianity having become the dominant religion, it is surprising that one can still find, albeit to a much lesser extent, the continued use of magical texts without Christian elements.¹ For instance, *PGM XXVIIIb*, an amulet dated to the sixth century and designed to protect against scorpions, is devoid of any Christian elements. Instead it contains Jewish elements and invokes the Ancient Egyptian god Horus with the commanding proclamation: ‘I bind you, scorpion of Artemisos, on the 13th’.² The appearance of such a magical amulet without Christian elements during a period when Egyptian society had become Christian is intriguing and raises the question of how to interpret its significance and place within the cultural and religious landscape of Egypt at the time. In the past, scholars would have regarded such a sixth-century amulet as an increasingly rare example of a ‘pagan survival’, following a fourth-century conflict between ‘paganism’ and Christianity, in which Christianity rapidly emerged triumphant. Rather than analysing the complex relationships between non-Christian religions and Christianity, these old religions were simply viewed as a necessary obstacle that Christianity had to defeat to become the dominant religion.

This perspective can be traced back to the eighteenth-century scholar Edward Gibbon and his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In his work, Gibbon discusses the causes for the eventual weakening and downfall of the Roman Empire, from its peak in the second century. The period of Late Antiquity is viewed as a dim era by him, and is characterised as a time of ‘decline’ that signalled the end of the greatness of the Roman Empire. For him, one of the primary causes for this ‘decline’ was Christianity, emerging victorious from a conflict with

¹ All dates are in the Common Era unless otherwise specified in this study.

² *PGM XXVIIIb*.

‘paganism’, where the latter quickly faced defeat, thereby sealing the grim fate of the Roman Empire.³ Building upon Gibbon's work, scholars throughout the twentieth century continued to underscore the concepts of ‘decline’ and ‘Christian triumph’, advancing the notions that the ‘triumph’ of Christianity required the ‘decline’ of the traditional religions.⁴

By the second half of the twentieth century, Peter Brown's *The World of Late Antiquity* initiated a shift in scholarly discourse regarding Late Antiquity and the religious transformation occurring during that period. Brown, in his publication, portrays the period in a much more positive light, highlighting it as a dynamic transitory period between the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages, ultimately giving rise to and popularising the field of Late Antique Studies.⁵ The shift towards a more positive perspective on Late Antiquity also influenced scholars' interpretations of the religious transformation occurring during this period. Terms like ‘Christian triumph’ and ‘decline’ previously used to describe the religious transformation process were replaced by a more nuanced perspective, recognising the complexity of interactions among different religions and the gradual transition towards Christianity during this time.⁶

Although Brown's work offers a new approach to interpret the period of Late Antiquity and its religious transformation process, in the last two decades there has been a resurgence of interest in exploring religious conflicts within this era, partly fuelled by the events of September 11, 2001.⁷ Moreover, the wealth of Christian sources documenting instances of violence against

³ E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols (London, 1776-1778).

⁴ See e.g. J. Geffcken, *Der Ausgang des griechisch-römischen Heidentums* (Heidelberg, 1920); A. Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 4th ed, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1924); A. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1964).

⁵ P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad* (London, 1971). A good overview on the effects of Peter Brown's work can be found in E. James, ‘The Rise and Function of the Concept “Late Antiquity”’ *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008) 20-30.

⁶ See e.g. R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (AD 100-400)* (New Haven, 1984); F.R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370-529*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1993-1994); A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011); M. Kahlos, *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity, 350-450* (Oxford, 2020).

⁷ E.g. J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt: Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)* (Berlin, 2004); M. Gaddis, *There*

temples, sanctuaries, and even people has further stimulated interest in the study of religious violence during Late Antiquity. This plethora of academic interest in these acts of religious violence has shown that such incidents of violence are not solely driven by religion. Instead, they are often influenced by political, social, and economic factors, and are not limited to specific times and locations. While these instances of religious violence have been prominent in academic discussions, it is essential to view them as occasional events within the more complex process of religious transformation, avoiding overemphasis on Christian accounts and instead studying them individually within their historical and cultural contexts.⁸

When examining the religious transformation process in Late Antiquity, Egypt inevitably stands out due to its wealth of preserved literary texts, inscriptions, papyri, and archaeological artefacts, all of which underscore the complexity of this phenomenon. It was Roger Bagnall's study, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, that served as a catalyst for scholars to delve deeper into analysing Egypt's religious transformation process and to move away from the outdated Christian versus 'pagan' paradigm that had previously dominated scholarly discourse. His work showcases that the declining influence and power of Egyptian temples by the fourth century stemmed from internal processes, tracing back to the first century and signifying that their 'decline' during this period was not primarily caused by the rise of Christianity, but did serve to benefit Christianity by facilitating its spread.⁹

Bagnall's work has garnered much attention and has also drawn criticism from David Frankfurter, who argues that the portrayal of institutionalised Christianity stepping in to replace the fading old religion still relies too heavily on 'Christian triumph' and 'decline' narratives.¹⁰

Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empires (Berkeley, 2005); C.P. Jones, *Between Pagan and Christian* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).

⁸ J.H.F. Dijkstra, C.R. Raschle (eds), *Religious Violence in the Ancient World: From Classical Athens to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2020); J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'Appropriation: A New Approach to Religious Transformation in Late Antiquity', *Numen* 68 (2021) 1–38 at 4–5.

⁹ R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993) 261–8.

¹⁰ D. Frankfurter, review of Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, in *BMCRev* (1994), available online at <https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1994/1994.03.19/>.

In response, he presents his own thoughts in, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, focusing on a ‘bottom-up’ approach, which traces the continuity of traditional cults and practices in Late Antique Egypt on a local and regional level. For Frankfurter, the diminishing influence of Egyptian temples observed by Bagnall represents a transformation of local religion rather than a ‘decline’. This transformation saw people moving away from the main religious centres towards worshipping in house shrines and altars.¹¹

Although Frankfurter succeeds in highlighting the active and dynamic nature of the religious transformation process, his work is criticised for its treatment of some of the sources, neglecting the impact of Christianity and portraying Egypt’s countryside as still abundant with traditional cults and practices lasting far into Late Antiquity.¹² In his more recent work, *Christianizing Egypt*, Frankfurter addresses these criticisms by focusing more on the impact of Christianity and offering a more nuanced view of Egypt’s religious transformation. He continues to utilise his ‘bottom-up’ approach and employs the concept of ‘syncretism’ to emphasise the different combination of elements from traditional religions and Christianity.¹³ Overall, his newer study is received more positively for its illumination of the intricate interplay between Christianity and other religions, but continues to overemphasise the continuity of the old religions akin to his prior work and overlooks instances where only elements from the emerging religion, or none at all, are embraced.¹⁴

Given these varying perspectives, the lingering issue persists as to how to comprehend Late Antique Egypt’s religious transformation process. In the last couple of decades, Jitse Dijkstra has been advocating for a solution to reconcile these diverse opinions by suggesting a

¹¹ D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 1998).

¹² For instance, see, A.D. Lee, review of Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, in *CR* 51 (2001) 74-6; O.E. Kaper, review of Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, in *BO* 58 (2001) 126-32; P. van Minnen, ‘Saving History? Egyptian Hagiography in Its Space and Time’, in J.H.F. Dijkstra and M. van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert: Egyptian Hagiography and the Medieval West* (Leiden, 2006) 39-55; Dijkstra, ‘Appropriation’, 6-7.

¹³ D. Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 2018).

¹⁴ For a discussion on Frankfurter’s 2018 study, see Dijkstra, ‘Appropriation’, 6-7.

middle ground approach. Originally proposed in his study on the religious transformation process in the Aswan region, he argues that while institutionalised Christianity became organised and expanded considerably in the fourth century, the process of religious transformation was much more dynamic. After all, Christianity took time to fully integrate into all levels of society, allowing for continuity of non-Christian practices and rituals on a local level, as well as dynamic interactions between the indigenous religions and emerging Christianity.¹⁵ By examining the religious transformation process through a lens of both continuity and change, rather than favouring one over the other, one is able to more effectively reflect and analyse the vibrant interactions that Christianity had with other religions, particularly on both a local and broader scale, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of how Christianity gradually established itself and spread in Egypt.

Establishing the Topic: A Study of Greek Amulets and Formularies without Christian Elements

It is against this backdrop of Egypt's religious transformation process, characterised by both continuity and change, that the interpretation of the amulet *PGM XXVIIIb* can be reframed. The presence of such a magical amulet not featuring Christian elements in a period when Christianity had become well established in Egyptian society prompts further research into these types of magical texts devoid of Christian elements during Late Antiquity. One cannot help but wonder whether, with the increasing expansion and establishment of Christianity, there are observable shifts in the use of such magical texts. This study thus aims to precisely analyse this issue and determine whether, as time progresses in Late Antiquity, we observe any noteworthy trends in the utilisation of Greek magical texts without Christian elements. In order

¹⁵ J.H.F. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298-642 CE)* (Leuven, 2008) 22-3. More recently, see, Dijkstra, 'Appropriation', 6.

to attain this purpose, an initial checklist has been compiled, listing all Greek magical texts without Christian elements dating to the fourth-seventh centuries in Egypt, which will serve as a basis for this study and can be found in Appendix 1.

Even though numerous studies and compilations of Greek magical texts exist, none have exclusively focused on Greek magical texts devoid of Christian elements dating to Late Antiquity, highlighting the need for the creation of such a checklist. One of the most important *corpora* of Greek magical texts is *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, originally compiled by Karl Preisendanz.¹⁶ Preisendanz's *corpus* has been expanded upon by Robert Daniel and Franco Maltomini in their *Supplementum Magicum*, which includes additional magical texts written in Greek.¹⁷ Despite, the fact that both *PGM* and *Suppl.Mag.* contain sections with 'pagan' texts and dating to Late Antiquity, since their publication, some of the texts they categorise as devoid of or containing Christian elements have been reclassified. Furthermore, since their publication three decades ago, many new Greek magical texts have been discovered, rendering both *PGM* and *Suppl.Mag.* less than comprehensive in providing an overview on the subject matter.

Although the age of technology has brought about online databases that allow scholars to access magical texts more quickly and easily, there remains a persistent need for a comprehensive checklist like ours. It is true that databases such as the Leuven Database of Ancient Books (LDAB), TM-Magic, and as of late the Kyprianos Magical Text Database are enormously valuable for gaining a first overview and accessing most magical texts.¹⁸ However, one should not solely rely on these databases, as they may sometimes contain inaccuracies, making it essential to verify the source of every entry. More significantly, these databases lack

¹⁶ K. Preisendanz, E. Heitsch, A. Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechische Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed., 2 vols (Stuttgart 1974). Note that the conventional *PGM* abbreviation for the papyri in this collection is used in this thesis. For a good overview of the different editions and publications of the *PGM*, see, H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation. Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago and London, 1986) xli-xliv.

¹⁷ R. Daniel, F. Maltomini (eds), *Supplementum Magicum*, 2. vols (Cologne, 1990). Henceforth, the abbreviation *Suppl.Mag.* shall be used to refer to any magical texts found in this collection.

¹⁸ LDAB and TM-Magic are accessible through Trismegistos at www.trismegistos.org, while Kyprianos can be accessed at <https://www.coptic-magic.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/index.php/the-database/>.

the capability to refine and classify the material, as much of it depends on the interpretation of the content. In addition to this, they do not always account for specific elements that a researcher may be seeking. For these reasons, relying solely on an online database is not sufficient and the creation of a checklist like ours, where each item has been verified, is necessary for ensuring the accuracy and comprehensive analysis of the material.

Recent studies, while not specifically centred on compiling Greek magical texts devoid of Christian elements, have significantly contributed to and aided us in the creation of our checklist. Most important of these is no doubt De Bruyn and Dijkstra's 2011 study compiling and analysing all Greek magical texts containing Christian elements from Late Antique Egypt.¹⁹ This study is particularly significant for our checklist because it lists all Greek magical amulets and formularies with Christian elements, serving as a model and basis for comparison with our checklist. Recently, in 2022, the first volume of Faraone and Torallas Tovar's, *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies*, was released, which provides a much-needed updated text, translation and commentary on all Greek formularies, including several relevant for our study.²⁰ By consulting such studies, we ensure that the entries in our checklist are accurately analysed, translated, and dated according to the latest scholarly consensus.

As we have seen, there exists a clear need for a checklist compiling all Greek magical texts that do not feature Christian elements. Accordingly, our study fulfils this need by focusing on compiling all Greek magical papyri without Christian elements from Egypt, rather than other regions within the Late Antique Mediterranean world. The exclusive focus on Egypt is primarily due to the abundance of Greek magical texts preserved on papyrus, the majority of

¹⁹ T. De Bruyn, J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets', *BASP* 48 (2011) 163-216.

²⁰ C. Faraone, S. Torallas Tovar, *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies: Text and Translation*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, 2022). The abbreviation *GEMF* is used in this thesis to refer to the texts in their work. Thanks are due to Sofia Torallas Tovar for sharing the numerical equivalents found in their upcoming vol. 2. However, it is important to note that this does not imply we have reviewed the texts in the forthcoming volume and thus no changes have been made to e.g. dates or interpretations based on that content.

which originate from there. Moreover, De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist of Greek magical texts with Christian elements, on which this study relies on for the examination of patterns of continuity and change in how people utilised magical texts over time, also consists mainly of papyri only and is thus focused on Egypt. Therefore, by maintaining the focus on Greek magical texts from Egypt, just like De Bruyn and Dijkstra's compilation, we can more effectively utilise and compare both checklists to accurately depict the usage and development of Greek magical texts in Late Antique Egypt.

The Structure of the Thesis

Thus far in this General Introduction, we have traced the scholarly evolution and debate surrounding Egypt's religious transformation, outlined the topic and objectives of our study, and demonstrated the need and reasoning for the creation of our checklist. Nevertheless, to effectively achieve our objectives, we must also convey and have a structure in place for such a study. Accordingly, this thesis is comprised of three main chapters and an appendix, which taken together present an explanation of the process of compiling the checklist (Chapters 1-2) and a detailed analysis of the gathered material (Chapter 3). By the conclusion, our study should demonstrate that as Christianity expanded and became more established, the use of magical texts without Christian elements was also transforming, displaying a pattern of both change and continuity.

In Chapter 1, we engage in the debate surrounding the term 'magic' and argue for its continued usage in academia. We establish criteria for defining texts as 'magical' and explore the concept of 'appropriation' in the study of such texts. In the first part, we refute the claims that the term 'magic' should be removed from academia and disaggregated due to its negative historical connotations and argue for its continued usage as a heuristic tool. After this, we trace the development of magic in the ancient world and establish criteria for our checklist to

determine whether a text should be labelled as magical. The chapter concludes by advocating for the concept of ‘appropriation’ in the study of magical texts to better understand the responses and individual agency of the practitioners and clients of these magical texts in an increasingly Christian world.

Chapter 2 further concentrates on establishing the criteria for the material chosen for our checklist of Greek magical texts devoid of Christian elements. It begins by defining the types of texts we consider to be amulets and formularies. The chapter then proceeds to outline the criteria for identifying Christian elements, which are subsequently excluded from our checklist. In the same section, we also address the challenges of determining whether an amulet or formulary originated in a Christian context and provide clarification on what this study considers to be a ‘traditional’ amulet or formulary. We end this chapter by providing the reasoning for the exclusion and inclusion of specific items in our checklist.

Finally, in Chapter 3, illustrated by numerous tables, the data from our checklist is analysed in order to isolate any discernible patterns in the usage and creation of Greek magical texts without Christian elements in Late Antique Egypt. The chapter begins by presenting essential contextual information, specifically the different materials our data is made out of and their respective provenance. It then proceeds with a comparative analysis of the dates of the material found in our checklist with those in De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s list. In the next section, the various types of magical texts and their intended purposes are analysed and compared to De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s catalogue. There follows a study of two traditional elements selected from our checklist, Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities, in order to unveil additional patterns within our data. In essence, this chapter, informed by the criteria established in the previous chapters for creating our checklist, aims to depict the evolving landscape of the utilisation of Greek magical texts without Christian elements in an increasingly Christian Egypt.

Chapter 1: Exploring the Concept of Magic

Introduction

In the last decade, scholars from different fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences have been in a heated argument over whether the controversial term ‘magic’ should continue to be used in academia. Fields such as Egyptology, Classical and Late Antique studies were not left unscathed by this scholarly dispute, being now faced with questions such as what the term magic represents, how magic and religion relate, what the most appropriate theoretical framework is for the study of magical texts and if magic should be examined through an emic or etic approach. Some scholars argue that the term magic is culturally insensitive and imprecise; others maintain that it is a useful concept that encompasses a wide range of practices and beliefs. This chapter advocates for the continued use of the term magic as a heuristic tool in the mentioned fields. In addition to this, it proposes Michael De Certeau’s theory of ‘appropriation’ as a framework for the study of ancient magical texts. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter is to provide a framework to assess how to best approach magical texts and thereby set the scene for the following chapters.

The function of magic in Graeco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt is analysed to demonstrate the benefits of using the term magic as a heuristic category, as well as the efficacy of Michael de Certeau’s theory of appropriation for the study of ancient magical texts. The reason for selecting Egypt as the focus of this chapter on magic is due to its long history spanning various religious systems within the chosen time frame, making it the ideal place to illustrate the advantages of utilising the aforementioned concepts. Furthermore, the main source of this chapter, the magical papyri, are only found in Egypt because of the favourable dry climate that helped preserve these ancient texts. By utilising the theory of appropriation and using magic as a heuristic category in Egypt, one can explore the broader social and cultural

significance of magic in a rich and diverse context. After all, Egypt was a cultural melting pot during the period in question, containing multiple cultural influences from various civilisations such as Ancient Egypt, Greece, Judaea and Rome, which created a plethora of diverse cults and practices.

This chapter contains three sections. The first section introduces the historical background of the modern debate on magic, and presents and refutes the arguments made against the continued use of the term magic. Primary sources from the Graeco-Roman and the Late Antique period of Egypt are employed to refute these arguments and demonstrate that the alternatives proposed for replacing the term magic fail to accurately reflect how ancient societies conceptualised magic. The next section explains the origins of the term magic and its development in the ancient world, followed by a proposed heuristic definition of the term that assists in the classification of material as magical. The last section discusses Michael De Certeau's theory of appropriation and its usefulness in studying magical material. This part highlights instances in Graeco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt that illustrate how people utilised their individual agency to make choices that resulted in the appropriation of magical material. Taken together, the discussions in this chapter are essential for the study of Greek magical amulets and formularies without Christian elements, as they provide a heuristic definition for magic, allowing for the categorisation of material as magical and granting better insight into their cultural and social significance.

Debunking Misconceptions of and Alternatives for the Term Magic

During the beginning of the twentieth century, in his work *The Golden Bough*, Sir James George Frazer writes that there was a time in human history when man relied solely on magic 'for the satisfaction of such wants transcended his immediate animal cravings'.²¹ This age of

²¹ J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (London, 1911) 70.

magic was defined by man's reliance on personal power and expertise to achieve his desired goals. For Frazer, this era served as a predecessor to more formal religious practices and, eventually, paved the way for the rise of scientific inquiry. He emphasises that the main difference between magic and religion is that while magic relies on personal power or skill, religion is based on the belief in supernatural beings who can influence human affairs through divine power and intervention. As the successor to magic, Frazer believes religion to be a part of a more advanced stage in human development marked by a more complex system of beliefs and practices that aid in establishing social structures and hierarchies.²² Frazer's influential distinction between religion and magic has become a crucial point of reference in the contemporary debate on magic.

Over the past century, scholars have built upon Frazer's work and established four main distinctions between magic and religion, which have been formalised and further elaborated. The first major difference that has been established is the intention of those participating in religious versus magical activities; where magic is utilised to achieve individualistic goals, religion focuses on immaterial long-term goals that concern the collective issues of society. The second key difference relates to attitude, considering that magic is manipulative by nature and religion is characterised by a more submissive and supplicatory approach. Following this distinction is the difference in action. Magic requires professional experience with an expectation of guaranteed results, whereas religion is not solely dependent on the practitioner but rather on the will of the divine and does not guarantee results. Finally, while magic is often viewed as morally wrong by society, religion is generally regarded in a positive light due to the 'positive social functions' it provides for communities.²³ Rather than settling the question

²² Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 60-75.

²³ For the provided overview, see, H.S. Versnel, 'Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion', *Numen* 38 (1991) 177-97 at 177-9.

of how to define magic, these distinctions have only added to the debate on whether the term magic should continue to be used and if the differences between magic and religion are valid.

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, anthropologists heavily criticised Frazer's proposed differentiation between magic and religion, arguing that there was no real distinction between the two concepts.²⁴ As a result, they suggested that the term 'magic' should be eliminated from scholarly terminology altogether, since it was perceived as a more negative synonym for religion. This view was challenged by Henk Versnel, in a seminal article published in 1991, who proposed that the debate on magic should not revolve around comparing it with religion. Instead the focus should be on distinguishing magical practices from non-magical practices. Accordingly, he argued that the term 'magic' is appropriate to use, since it is a useful and broad concept that can help academics understand and explain certain ancient ritual practices and social processes.²⁵ While Versnel's work has been influential in redirecting the debate on magic away from comparisons with religion, the question of whether to use the term 'magic' has recently emerged again. As a result, over the past decade, there has been ongoing concern regarding the continued use of the label 'magic' due to its vagueness and association with negative connotations.

One of the prominent advocates for the removal of the term 'magic' from academic scholarship is Bernd-Christian Otto, who notably cites the historically pejorative connotations of the term to support his argument. In this instance, Frazer's differentiation between the morality of magic and religion strengthens Otto's point that magic is not a neutral or unbiased term. According to Otto, when looking at the Graeco-Roman and Late Antique world, the term magic has been utilised to 'exclude and stigmatise beliefs and ritual behaviours' that diverge from the religious norms of the ancient elite. Therefore, when analysing magical acts in ancient

²⁴ See e.g. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (Glencoe, 1952); M. Wax, R. Wax, 'The Notion of Magic', *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963) 495-518; D. Hammond, 'Magic: A Problem in Semantics', *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970) 1349-56.

²⁵ Versnel, 'Some Reflections', 184-7.

sources, the term magic oftentimes may not reflect the perspective or beliefs associated with a group's or individual's ritual practices, as many of those referred to as magicians may have not used such a term to describe themselves.²⁶

To give some examples, Pliny the Elder's Book 30 of his *Natural History* is anything but complimentary about magic, claiming that magic consists of the most impostures and is the most 'fraudulent of arts'.²⁷ Later in his work when speaking about the Gallic provinces, he claims in these territories 'magic had found a home' and that thankfully Tiberius had put down the different Gallic tribes utilising this craft.²⁸ Pliny's negative characterisation of the Gallic druids' ritual practices as magic raises doubts about whether the druids themselves would have considered their rituals to be magical. Similarly to Pliny, during the Late Antique period, Christian writers, such as Augustine, emphasised the belief that magic is part of 'illegitimate religions' and that true Christians are not capable of utilising any sort of magic whether harmful or beneficial.²⁹ In his *On the City of God*, he asserts that magic is performed according to 'the teaching and actions of demons' and that all the 'miracles of the magicians are worthy of condemnation'.³⁰ Augustine's condemnation of magic is directly criticising the traditional Graeco-Roman religion, whose followers he claims are in league with demons.³¹ Like Pliny, he uses the concept of magic to stigmatise and criticise other people's religious practices.

While the term magic was used by writers such as Pliny and Augustine as a means of condemning unacceptable religious practices for them, practitioners and clients in Graeco-Roman and Late Antique Egyptian societies did not necessarily perceive magic in a negative way. In late Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, people would ordinarily seek the help of ritual

²⁶ B.-C. Otto, 'Towards Historicizing "Magic" in Antiquity', *Numen* 60 (2013) 308-47 at 315-30.

²⁷ Plin. *HN* 30.1; trans. W. Jones, *Pliny, Natural History, Volume VIII: Libri XXVIII-XXXII* (Cambridge, MA, 1963) 279.

²⁸ Plin. *HN* 30.4; Jones, *Natural History*, 287.

²⁹ F. Graf, 'Theories of Magical Antiquity', in P. Mirecki, M. Meyer (eds), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 2002) 93-104 at 96.

³⁰ Aug. *Civ.* 8.19; trans. D. Wiesen, *Augustine, City of God, Vol. III: Books VIII-IX* (Cambridge, MA, 1968) 89.

³¹ Graf, 'Theories of Magical Antiquity', 96.

specialists who claimed they could communicate with deities, demons, and the dead to help them overcome various troubles in their lives.³² These ritual specialists were for the most part Egyptian priests, who utilised Hellenised ritual compositions during late Ptolemaic and Roman times and considered magic to be a religious tool that aided them in their role as religious functionaries in Egyptian temples.³³ Evidence of this is found within a formulary from the third century, where Pnouthis, the practitioner who performs the spell, a sacred scribe, is referred to as an ‘initiate of the sacred magic’.³⁴ The fact that the spell refers to magic as sacred illustrates how for practitioners and clients of this spell, magic played a positive role in their religious system and ritual practices.

Additionally, following the rise of Christianity in Egypt, there are magical objects that incorporate elements from both Christianity and traditional religions. This is well-demonstrated by a sixth-century magical amulet that invokes both Jesus and a ‘white wolf’ to heal a ‘shivering fever’.³⁵ The ‘white wolf’ is invoked three times in the amulet and is likely a reference to either Horus or Apollo, both of whom are associated with this animal and colour.³⁶ The existence of magical artefacts like this amulet suggests that Christians sought out practitioners and creators of such objects to aid them in their troubles, indicating that, as late as the sixth century, for Christians, magic continued to be an accepted and even helpful art. Evidently, besides having negative connotations, magic was considered a sacred or helpful tool by some, and therefore should not simply be removed from scholarship and categorised as a historical negative pejorative term, as this undermines those who used and held it in a positive light.

³² J. Dieleman, ‘The Graeco-Egyptian Magical Papyri’, in D. Frankfurter (ed.), *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic* (Leiden, 2019) 283-321 at 284-5.

³³ D. Frankfurter, ‘Ancient Magic in a New Key: Refining an Exotic Discipline in the History of Religions’, in Frankfurter, *Guide*, 3-20 at 8-9.

³⁴ *PGM* I.127.

³⁵ *Suppl. Mag.* I 34. See C.A. Faraone, *Vanquishing Acts on Ancient Greek Amulets: From Oral Performance to Visual Design* (London, 2012) 26-9.

³⁶ Dijkstra, ‘Appropriation’, 22-3.

Another issue with the designation of magic is the term's broadness and vagueness, considering that Frazer's criteria for identifying a magical text does not adequately account for the intricacies of ancient ritual practices.³⁷ For instance, the claim that magic is always manipulative and religion is always supplicative is not always true in practice.³⁸ An amulet discovered in Egypt dating from the fourth or fifth century displays the difficulty in categorising an object as either magical or religious based on traditional criteria. The amulet entreats Jesus to heal a maidservant stating, 'We beseech you, Jesus.', but, at the same time, the next sentence uses the imperative to command Jesus, saying 'Now heal your maidservant'.³⁹ The amulet's plain use of both supplication and command highlights the intricacies of the ancient's religious thought and creates a challenge in applying the traditional categorisation of magic as manipulative and religion as supplicative. Thus due to this limitation, several scholars have recently advocated for the disaggregation of practices and functions typically associated with the term magic, into their distinct religious components, such as cursing, healing, exorcism, and so on, believing it to better capture the complex reality of the ancients' belief systems than the word magic.⁴⁰

Although the solution of disaggregating practices and functions typically associated with magic may appear more precise and appropriate, it is not without drawbacks either. At first glance, the disaggregated categories such as healing, protection, cursing, and so on may seem to more accurately reflect the ancients' ritual functions and practices than the term magic, but, in truth, they still face the same taxonomic ambiguity. When analysing a sixth-century

³⁷ J.E. Sanzo, 'Deconstructing the Deconstructionists: A Response to Recent Criticisms of the Rubric "Ancient Magic"', in A. Mastrocinque, J.E. Sanzo and M. Scapini (eds), *Ancient Magic: Then and Now* (Stuttgart, 2020) 25-46 at 26-9.

³⁸ A. Jeffers, 'Interpreting Magic and Divination in the Ancient Near East', *Religion Compass* 1 (2001) 684-94 at 684-6.

³⁹ *Suppl.Mag* I 31. The verb in question is *θεράπευσον* which is in the aorist imperative form, literally commanding Jesus to heal the maidservant.

⁴⁰ E.g. J.Z. Smith, 'Trading Places', in Mirecki and Meyer, *Magic and Ritual*, 13-27; Otto, "Towards Historicizing "Magic"", 320-2; D.E. Aune, 'The Use of the Term "Magic" as a Socio-Religious Category in the Study of the Greco-Roman World and Early Christianity', in S. Black, A. Batten (eds), *To Set at Liberty: Essays on Early Christianity and Its Social World in Honor of John H. Elliott* (London, 2014) 15-26.

amulet from Herakleopolis Magna, the issue with utilising the proposed disaggregated categories becomes apparent as it states both ‘remove every sickness’ and ‘chase away from me, the demon’.⁴¹ Clearly, such an amulet is difficult to classify under the proposed disaggregated terms as it could be categorised under healing, exorcism, or even protection. Furthermore, the amulet illustrates how these proposed categories were not clearly defined by the ancients, but rather were fluid and constantly overlapped with one another.⁴² When taking this into consideration, the proposed solution to disaggregate the term magic is not convincing but rather compromises our ability to comprehend the ancients’ perception and comprehension of the ritual functions and practices they typically labelled as magic.

Hence, the word magic is required to properly study and understand the wide range of different practices and rituals ranging all the way from healing to cursing that were performed by the ancients. Just as we nowadays use the term magic to encompass a wide range of practices and beliefs, societies in Antiquity had a general conceptual rubric to classify such practices and beliefs.⁴³ This is supported by Michael Swartz’s study of Jewish magic, where he observes that there ‘is a great deal of formal cohesion among amulets, magical handbooks, and the like’.⁴⁴ Moreover, Canon 36 of the Council of Laodicea states that ‘those who are of the priesthood, or of the clergy, ought not to be magicians, enchanters, numerologists, (...)’ and that they should not make or wear ‘amulets which are chains for their own souls’.⁴⁵ The use of the term ‘magician’ and the prohibition of producing amulets in this law demonstrates some of the practices and material items Church leaders associated with the term magic.⁴⁶ Despite potential differences in the way ancient Christian leaders conceptualised magic, compared to other

⁴¹ *BGU* III 954; trans. Sanzo, ‘Deconstructing the Deconstructionists’, 36.

⁴² Sanzo, ‘Deconstructing the Deconstructionists’, 37.

⁴³ Sanzo, ‘Deconstructing the Deconstructionists’, 35.

⁴⁴ M. Swartz, ‘The Dead Sea Scrolls and Jewish Magic and Mysticism’, *Dead Sea Discoveries* 8 (2001) 182-93 at 190.

⁴⁵ Translation from H. F. Stander, ‘Amulets and the Church Fathers’, *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 75 (1993) 55–66 at 64.

⁴⁶ Sanzo, ‘Deconstructing the Deconstructionists’, 35-6.

societies and modern-day thinkers, it is evident that they had a conceptual rubric in mind to classify certain practices and beliefs as magic.

Understanding and Defining Magic in Antiquity

As shown in the previous section, the proposed reasons for removing the term magic from academic discourse are not convincing. However, the question remains of how to define magic and so the first obstacle is to decide whether to use an emic or etic definition. The problem of operating with a strictly etic definition of magic is that it would rely too heavily on modern conceptions, leading to a distorted view of how magic was understood by the ancients. As Matthew Dickie argues, scholars need to be ‘sensitive to the differences that exist between what the ancients saw as magic’ and what they themselves ‘might be inclined to call magic’, which for him is achievable by utilising an emic approach that defines magic ‘through the eyes of the members of the society studied’.⁴⁷ Similarly, though, when scholars use a strictly emic definition of magic, they are susceptible to their own modern-day biases and may struggle to make overarching statements about magic as a whole, since each society had a different understanding and interpretation of what constitutes magic.⁴⁸ As a result, a good balance between the emic and etic approaches needs to be struck in order to come up with a working definition for magic.

Given that every society and period had its unique understanding of magic and a strictly etic definition of magic is not possible, in order to define magic, a brief overview of how each society comprehended magic is required, starting with pharaonic Egypt up until the Christian period. During the pharaonic era, ‘magic’ is part of the natural force known as *heka*, which was

⁴⁷ M. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London, 2005) 18-20.

⁴⁸ Frankfurter, ‘Ancient Magic in a New Key’, 4-5. This is particularly problematic when studying Egypt, which was a fusion of different cultures in Antiquity.

used by the divine in creating the ordered world.⁴⁹ *Heka* was viewed as something neutral that, not only the gods, but, also humans could harness, and depending on the intentions of the practitioner, could be used for either good or evil purposes.⁵⁰ Positive uses of *heka* are observed in both the private and public spheres, such as healing and protection rituals conducted by priests during their off-duty hours from temple services and state rituals for defense purposes. However, *heka* could also be used to negatively harm a person's health and well-being or the state by attempting to impair the pharaoh and the royal family.⁵¹ As can be seen, the use of *heka* in private rituals was widely accepted and was not considered ambiguous or illegitimate, since it depended on how it was utilised, specifically the intention of the ritual expert in employing it for either positive or negative purposes.

In the Greek world, the word 'magic' evolved into a term that describes malicious foreign ritual practices. The earliest use of the word *magos* is attributed to Heraclitus in the sixth century BC, which he used to refer to individuals who were practitioners of private cults. During the fifth century BC, Herodotus, the father of history, identified the *magoi* as members of the priestly class in the Zoroastrian religion of Persia, associating them with practices such as the interpretation of dreams, libations, sacrifices and the singing of hymns. In the fifth century BC, *magoi* would roam through Greece, offering their services to the populace who were increasingly dissatisfied with traditional Greek religion.⁵² The negative connotations associated with the *magoi* and their practices likely stem from their Persian background and the prevailing perception of Persians, as well as all non-Greeks, as 'barbarians' in the Greek world.⁵³ Moreover, their unregulated private rites likely raised suspicion from the Greek *polis*,

⁴⁹ R. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago, 1997) 17.

⁵⁰ J. Dieleman, 'Egypt', in Frankfurter, *Guide*, 91, 113. Dieleman notes that *heka* was harnessed through rituals by individuals who possessed the specialized knowledge and training.

⁵¹ Dieleman, 'Egypt', 95-106. Dieleman suggests as well that practitioners who utilised *heka* for negative purposes were subject to capital punishment if discovered.

⁵² For an overview on the origins of Magic in the Greek world, see J.N. Bremmer, 'The Birth of the Term "Magic"', *ZPE* 126 (1999) 1-12 at 3-8.

⁵³ K. Stratton, 'Early Greco-Roman Antiquity', in D. Collins (ed), *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, 2015) 83-112 at 92.

seeing that the *polis* was meant to regulate and legitimise all religious activity.⁵⁴ Even though their rituals involving incantations, libations, whispering and singing may have been discouraged by the state and degraded in tragedy and rhetoric, the *magoi* still managed to attract a number of clients due to their perceived exoticism.⁵⁵

The negative conception of magic was imported from the Greeks to the Romans in the Hellenistic period through authors like Apollonius of Rhodes and Theocritus.⁵⁶ Before the arrival of the Greek concept of magic in Roman society, laws such as the Twelve Tables existed, which condemned acts such as the use of *mala carmina*, later associated with magic.⁵⁷ However, these laws did not explicitly forbid the use of incantations, which suggests that certain actions that later came to be associated with magic were not prohibited at that time.⁵⁸ During the time in power of Sulla in 81 BC, the *Lex Cornelia de Sicariis et Veneficis* was passed, which prohibited the use of poisons as a means of committing murder.⁵⁹ Shortly after, in the first century, Pliny the Elder portrays the *magi* as Persian ritual specialists who used plants, animal substances and stones in their rites.⁶⁰ Correspondingly, by the second century, with the spread and evolution of the Greek concept of magic in the Roman world, both *venana* and *carmina* became associated with the *magus*, resulting in those in power viewing magic as evil and a *maleficium*.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Stratton, 'Early Greco-Roman Antiquity', 93.

⁵⁵ Bremmer, 'Birth of the Term "Magic"', 7-9; Stratton, 'Early Greco-Roman Antiquity', 92. Euripides' play *Iphigenia* is a notable example of how magic was often depicted as something negative in Greek tragedies, and usually associated with barbarous songs and rituals.

⁵⁶ Stratton, 'Early Greco-Roman Antiquity', 98.

⁵⁷ J.B. Rives, 'Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime', *ClAnt* 22 (2003) 313-39 at 314-6.

⁵⁸ Stratton, 'Early Greco-Roman Antiquity', 99.

⁵⁹ Rives, 'Magic in Roman Law', 317-8.

⁶⁰ J.B. Rives, 'Magus and Its Cognates in Classical Latin', in R. Gordon and F.M. Simon (eds), *Magical Practice in the Latin West* (Leiden, 2010) 51-77 at 64-5, who states that Pliny 'built on the established Greek view' and that it is possible Pliny got his 'lore from Hellenistic pseudepigrapha'.

⁶¹ Rives, 'Magic in Roman Law', 318. Note that the use of *venana* (poisons) would have required good knowledge of plants in the Roman Empire, which as stated earlier Pliny attributed to the *magi*, indicating that perhaps he aided in popularising the idea that *venana* are associated with magic in the Roman Empire.

Despite the desire of those in power in Rome to suppress *magi*, magical practices, material and ritual experts, were sought out by the general populace and even the elite to improve and enhance their daily lives.⁶² A good example of this is the trial of Apuleius in 158 CE. Apuleius, a Latin writer and Platonic philosopher, was accused of using magic to seduce a widow named Pudentilla. During his trial, Apuleius states that most people, including his accusers, believe a magician is able ‘to fulfil his every wish by spells that have some kind of extraordinary power’.⁶³ The fact that there was a widespread belief during Apuleius’ trial that magicians through their use of magic had extraordinary power capable of fulfilling one’s wish provides a glimpse into why both the general populace and intellectuals sought such individuals and practices. Regardless of how it was viewed by those in power, the trial highlights that for many magic was simply a tool for achieving one’s goals and desires and not something necessarily unorthodox.

For Christians, accusations of magic were often used as a means to denounce and diminish non-Christian cults and practices.⁶⁴ Christian writers countered the accusations of human sacrifice and magic made against them by non-Christians, while simultaneously accusing non-Christians of similar charges and attributing their rites to the assistance of demons.⁶⁵ Non-Christians viewed Christian miracles, such as healing and exorcism, as magical acts, while Christians defended these miracles by asserting that they originated from God and, therefore, cannot be considered magical.⁶⁶ Although healing and exorcism were considered permissible when performed through God, other rites that, for example, ‘turned virtuous minds

⁶² K.A. Fraser, ‘Roman Antiquity’, in Collins, *Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft*, 115-146 at 116-8; Rives, ‘Magic in Roman Law’, 322-3. Fraser mentions that this was especially popular in Egypt, where most of our evidence comes from.

⁶³ Apul. *Apol.* 26; trans. C.P. Jones, *Apulueius, Apology* (Cambridge, MA, 2017) 73.

⁶⁴ For a more comprehensive treatment, see, J.E. Sanzo, ‘Early Christianity’, in Frankfurter, *Guide*, 198-239; Graf, ‘Theories of Magical Antiquity’, 96.

⁶⁵ L. Watson, ‘Human Sacrifice in Ancient Magic?’, in L. Watson (ed.), *Magic in Ancient Greece and Rome* (London, 2019) 203-19 at 207.

⁶⁶ A. Tuzlak, ‘The Magician and the Heretic: The Case of Simon Magus’, in Mirecki and Meyer, *Magic and Ritual*, 416-26 at 423.

to lust' were criminalised and punished in the *Codex Theodosianus*.⁶⁷ The existence of such a law in the Christian Roman Empire illustrates that the use of magical rites to achieve personal gain and improve one's life persisted during the Christian era, despite the disapproval of those in power. *Ergo*, in theory, Christians differentiated between legitimate and illegitimate rituals based on the intended outcome and whether the perceived power behind them originated from God or demons.⁶⁸

This overview of magic's development in all the different periods of Ancient Egypt demonstrates how it was a social and religious construct, which was accepted in some cultures like pharaonic Egypt, used by Greeks and Romans to denounce other cultural ritual practices, and employed by Christians to discredit non-Christian religions. Consequently, a strict definition of magic is impossible. However, a broad definition is still conceivable, as magic can be thought of as a type of ritual that involves performing specific acts and gestures, which sometimes incorporate the use of words and certain objects to achieve a specific goal.⁶⁹ Such a broad and heuristic definition of magic that is not based on societal rejection or acceptance of particular rituals and religious systems, is crucial in creating a set of criteria, which distinguish magical texts and amulets from non-magical ones.

Appropriately, magic can serve as a heuristic category, which is characterised by an inclusive list of criteria, rather than relying on fixed or rigid criteria for categorisation. In this sense, utilising magic as a heuristic category allows for a more inclusive approach to categorisation, where a text can still be considered magical even if it does not fulfil all the required criteria. This method employs both the etic and emic approaches, as the criteria are

⁶⁷ *C. Th.* 9.16.3; trans. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code, and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, 1952) 237.

⁶⁸ Graf, 'Theories of Magical Antiquity', 96.

⁶⁹ Bélanger Sarrazin, *Les divinités gréco-égyptiennes dans les textes magiques coptes: une étude du syncrétisme religieux en Égypte tarde-antique et médiévale* (doctoral dissertation; Ottawa, 2020) 23.

developed from our contemporary external perspective, while also taking into consideration and mimicking closely the ancient perspective on what constitutes magical characteristics.

In a recent study, Roxanne Bélanger Sarrazin has established magic as a heuristic category with flexible criteria for classifying magical texts. She gives a comprehensive list of criteria, of which a text must meet at least one to be considered magical. Her first criterion is the self-identification of a specific purpose, such as healing, incantation, or cursing, within the text.⁷⁰ The second criterion is the presence of formulas of adjuration, which are commands or orders that compel an entity through an oath to carry out the requested action.⁷¹ Following this is the identification of any victim or beneficiary in the text, who is meant to be the target of the ritual or rite being performed as well as any *historiolae*, which are short mythic stories that connect the events of the mythical world to the objective of the charm. Formulas such as ‘now, now, quickly, quickly’ at the end of texts and *voces magicae*, which are magical words and names, sometimes of foreign origins, like Jewish names and epithets of God like Iao and Sabaoth, but often incomprehensible, are further characteristics that indicate that a text could be magical. Lastly, *charakteres*, mystical symbols resembling modified Latin and Greek letters that often represent divine powers, along with *figurae magicae*, images of deities, supernatural beings and protective entities invoked in incantations and often surrounded by *charakteres*, are common attributes found in magical texts.⁷²

The fluidity and adaptability of utilising this list of specific criteria to classify magical texts in Antiquity are particularly beneficial when working with texts from Egypt, a land with many different peoples and cultures. When utilising these criteria, scholars are also able to

⁷⁰ Note that the text of the ritual or rite performed should provide evidence of a specific goal that the practitioner and client aim to achieve through the performance of the ritual.

⁷¹ A more detailed description and explanation of the adjuration can be found in, Y. Harari, ‘What Is a Magical Text? Methodological Reflections Aimed at Redefining Early Jewish Magic’, in S. Shaked (ed.), *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity* (Leiden, 2005) 91-124 at 119-20.

⁷² For a more detailed discussion on the proposed criteria, see, Bélanger Sarrazin, *Divinités gréco-égyptiennes*, 25-8. For the important role images play in magical texts, see J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘The Interplay Between Magic and Text on Greek Amulets Containing Christian Elements from Late Antique Egypt’, in J.N. Bremmer, D. Boschung (eds), *The Materiality of Magic* (Paderborn, 2015) 271-88.

compare and contrast various magical texts from diverse cultural backgrounds, as they are not confined to a rigid definition that may apply to one society but not to others. Additionally, these criteria can shed light on the practices and objects that the ancients regarded as magical, as the texts that meet these criteria often contain references to rituals and objects used in magical practices. Finally, Bélanger Sarrazin's proposed criteria do not imply that the definition of what constitutes a magical text must remain static, but, rather, they encourage constant reflection and a dynamic debate about the boundaries and characteristics of magic.

Unpacking the Benefits of Appropriation for the Study of Magic

Now that we have established a working definition of what constitutes a magical text, we will propose a framework for the study of these texts. The study of the individual agency has historically been overlooked in the fields of Classics and Late Antique Studies, but more recently, the historian of ancient religions Jörg Rüpke has addressed this important aspect of Antiquity in his book, *On Roman Religion*. His work promotes the concept of 'lived religion' put forth by Meredith McGuire, which is the idea that individuals constantly interpreted religious traditions through their individual agency.⁷³ This also applies to antiquity, as many religious rituals were performed alone.⁷⁴

A compelling case of this can be found in Roman households, where each household had its unique arrangement and combination of divine statues and images, showcasing the distinct character and agency of individual households.⁷⁵ These deliberate choices individuals made concerning which divine statue or image to place in their homes, were often influenced by their personal life experiences, including travel, texts they had read, or interactions with

⁷³ See M. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford, 2008)

⁷⁴ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion* (Ithaca, 2016) 10.

⁷⁵ J. Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva, Penates, and the Mother of the Lares: An Outline of Roman Domestic Religion', in J. Bodel, S. Olyan (eds), *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (Malden, 2008) 248-75 at 261, Rüpke, *Roman Religion*, 19.

other people, portraying how their individualisation was, in part, shaped by social factors.⁷⁶ The concept of lived religion displays how religion was not static, but rather constantly evolving due to its dependency on individual agency.

The notion of lived religion aligns well with the theory of ‘appropriation’, which emphasises the role of social factors, particularly the relationship between individuals and their agency in relation to a dominant culture. The French priest Michel de Certeau, is considered to be a pioneer of the theory of appropriation.⁷⁷ In his work, *L’invention du quotidien*, Certeau explores how ordinary individuals navigate and respond to messages propagated by a dominant culture. For Certeau, strategies are the messages and operations enforced by powerful institutions, while tactics are the ways individuals respond to them in order to turn them to their benefit.⁷⁸ His perspective underscores the agency individuals had as creative agents, who actively engage with and reinterpret messages received from those in power.⁷⁹ The concept is especially useful in cross-cultural contexts as it can display how individuals from different cultural backgrounds engage with and appropriate elements of the dominant culture for their own benefit.⁸⁰

De Certeau applies the theory of appropriation to the Spanish colonisation of the Americas, exhibiting its practicality in cross-cultural contexts. Whilst the Spanish were successful in the conquering and colonisation of the Americas, the natives, whom they tried to assimilate, ‘often made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind’.⁸¹ The indigenous people of the Americas did not have the power to challenge their colonisers and thus had to find another way

⁷⁶ Rüpke, *Roman Religion*, 19-20.

⁷⁷ P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge, 2005) 97-8.

⁷⁸ M. de Certeau, *L’invention du quotidien I: arts de faire* (Paris, 1980).

⁷⁹ Burke, *History and Social Theory*, 98.

⁸⁰ Dijkstra, ‘Appropriation’, 9.

⁸¹ Certeau, *Invention du quotidien I*, 12; trans. S. Randall, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, 1984) xiii.

to preserve their culture. Some tried to reject or transform the laws, practices and religion imposed on them, but many ‘subverted them from within’ by ‘using them in the service of rules, customs or convictions foreign to the colonisation, which they could not escape’.⁸² Certeau emphasises that many indigenous people, despite being subjected to the dominant Spanish culture during colonisation, did not completely reject or transform it but, instead, used their individual agency and interpretation to find ways to utilise the dominant culture for their own benefit, allowing them to maintain their distinct cultural identity and remain different from the colonisers.

The concept of appropriation, according to Certeau, thus takes into account and studies the whole spectrum of responses that people have towards a dominant culture from assimilation and accommodation all the way to perversion and resistance.⁸³ When taking this into consideration, Certeau’s theory can offer valuable insights when examining the religious transformation that took place in Late Antique Egypt, since the Egyptian populace employed similar tactics in response to the religious changes that occurred during that time. Specifically, by closely inspecting the diverse responses of Late Antique Egypt’s populace to the establishment of Christianity into society during a culturally rich and cross-cultural era with a unique mix of different religious traditions, the complex dynamics at play between Christians and other traditional religious groups can be better illuminated.⁸⁴

The application of the theory of appropriation to the study of magical texts is best exemplified in the magical papyri, as they offer valuable insights into the responses and individual agency the practitioners and clients of such texts had towards the increasingly dominant role of Christianity. Magical material devoid of Christian elements continues to exist and appear during the period of Late Antiquity, as we have already seen in the General

⁸² Certeau, *Invention du quotidien I*, 79; trans. Randall, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 32.

⁸³ Dijkstra, ‘Appropriation’, 9.

⁸⁴ Dijkstra, ‘Appropriation’, 7.

Introduction.⁸⁵ In a fourth-century handbook of magical recipes, there is a recipe with an invocation to the god Seth-Typhon without espousing any Christian elements.⁸⁶ This invocation is intriguing to analyse within the framework of appropriation, as it could reflect a range of responses. Perhaps it signifies the rejection of or resistance to Christianity by clients or practitioners of the traditional cults and practices, or it could represent an accommodation by clients and practitioners who still valued such non-Christian magical texts culturally but not religiously. Additionally, the use of such an amulet by Christians might also indicate their outright acceptance of these powers in a magical context or a habitual practice of seeking magical efficacy without much further consideration of the amulet's religious or cultural significance.

Another case worth investigating is an amulet from sixth-century Oxyrhynchus that utilises a blend of elements from different religious traditions, possibly in an attempt to protect a house from snakes.⁸⁷ The amulet *P.Oxy.* VII 1060, calls on both St. Phocas, a Christian Syrian martyr, known for healing people from snake bites, and Hor Hor (Horus) and Aphrodite, traditional deities, to protect it 'from every evil creeping thing'.⁸⁸ Within the framework of appropriation, such an amulet could evoke a variety of responses. If the practitioners or clients would be non-Christians, though unlikely at this point in time, a possible interpretation of their response would be assimilation, as they would be slowly incorporating elements from Christianity into their own practices.⁸⁹ It could also be a creation of a new hybrid form of belief or practice. Alternatively, the amulet could be interpreted as a form of transformation, wherein

⁸⁵ See e.g. J. van der Vliet, 'Charming a Clogged Nose: A Late Coptic Magical Spell from Saqqara', *JNES* 18 (2018) 145-66.

⁸⁶ *PGM* XXXVI.1-34, with Dijkstra, 'Appropriation', 21.

⁸⁷ *P.Oxy.* VII 1060, on which see T.S. De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Context* (Oxford, 2017) 92-3.

⁸⁸ *P.Oxy.* VII 1060; trans. De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 93-4. De Bruyn speculates that 'from every evil creeping thing' is a reference to snakes.

⁸⁹ Important to note that the late date of the amulet makes this unlikely though as most practitioners and clients would have been Christian already.

Christians incorporated elements of the Christian saint Phocas, and the traditional deities, and adapted them to fit within their existing practices or beliefs.

Lastly, there are magical texts and amulets that contain purely Christian elements, as is the case with a sixth-century amulet against diseases from Oxyrhynchus.⁹⁰ The amulet starts with the phrase, 'the healing Gospel according to Matthew' and continues on citing a slightly adapted story version of Matthew 4:23-24.⁹¹ When applying the theory of appropriation to analyze this amulet, one could argue that it represents a form of assimilation by Christians into the dominant discourse of the time. By incorporating Christian elements into their amulet, Christians may have sought to align themselves with the new dominant Christian faith, which lets them showcase their commitment to the Christian faith. Additionally, the amulet could signify the complete takeover of Christianity and the rejection of any alternative religious beliefs.

Ultimately, the theory of appropriation is not intended to provide definitive answers on how these magical texts and amulets were used, as it is commonly acknowledged that the religious identities of their makers and practitioners are largely unknown. Instead, it serves as a framework for scholars to reflect on the individual agency of these individuals and how their responses to the dominant culture could be reflected in these texts and amulets. One should also consider that unlike the term 'syncretism' which has recently also been used in ancient magic studies, and which presupposes a combination of different elements, appropriation covers the entire spectrum of responses by individuals to a dominant culture.⁹² By analysing all these different responses by individuals, the cultural exchange and the dynamic relationships between different groups and traditions in the ancient world can be better understood

⁹⁰ *P. Oxy.* VIII 1077, with Dijkstra, 'Appropriation', 23.

⁹¹ Dijkstra, 'Appropriation', 23.

⁹² For more details on the use of syncretism in ancient magic studies, see, D. Frankfurter, 'Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt', *J ECS* 11 (2003) 339-85; Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 15-24; cf. Dijkstra, 'Appropriation', 6-7.

Conclusion

All in all, this chapter supports the continued use of the term magic in academic discourse, as the arguments against its inclusion are not compelling. While it may be impossible to establish a strict universal definition for magic, a heuristic definition of magic with flexible criteria is possible and can aid in the differentiation of magical texts from non-magical ones, allowing scholars to study and compare the concept of magic in culturally diverse contexts, such as in Egypt. Furthermore, the use of appropriation as a framework for the study of magical texts can help illuminate the ways in which people used their individual agency in the creation and wearing of various magical amulets and texts to respond to the dominant religion of Christianity in Late Antique Egypt. This approach can shed better light on the cultural and religious dynamics of the time.

In the grand scheme of things, this chapter serves as a crucial foundation for the classification and analysis of the proposed material, Greek magical texts without Christian elements of Late Antique Egypt, in the following chapters. It provides the basis for understanding the cultural context in which these texts were produced and how the concept of magic evolved and was understood over time in Egypt. Applying the concept of appropriation to the study of these amulets and formularies without Christian elements can provide valuable insights into how the religious transformation of Late Antique Egypt might have been perceived by individuals, who employed these amulets and formularies as a means of expressing their agency in the changing religious landscape.

Chapter 2: Towards the Creation of a Checklist of Greek Amulets and Formularies without Christian Elements

Introduction

The main challenge of creating a checklist involves the determination of the criteria and types of text that should be included within it. The first significant decision that one encounters when compiling a comprehensive checklist of magical texts from the ancient world is whether to embrace an exclusive or inclusive methodology for the compilation of the material. For this thesis, the checklist of Greek amulets and formularies from Late Antiquity containing Christian elements developed by De Bruyn and Dijkstra has served as a model. Their checklist is characterised by a highly inclusive approach that encompasses not only spells and charms but also formularies and any texts written in Greek (and some in Latin) that attempt to convey supernatural powers, whether for positive or negative outcomes, that feature Christian elements found in Egypt.⁹³

This checklist adopts De Bruyn and Dijkstra's approach because this study is meant to similarly investigate the continuity of function and changes in the production and usage observed in these different kinds of magical materials within the context of the religious transformation of Late Antique Egypt. Furthermore, since it includes all Greek amulets and formularies from this period without Christian elements, it will serve as a complement to the earlier checklist and will also allow us to compare the data in both lists. For our data collection, similar to De Bruyn and Dijkstra's, we reviewed various papyrological series, but also utilised the online databases of Kyprianos and Trismegistos, which offered a general overview of published magical texts for further reference and exploration.

⁹³ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies', with pp. 167-73 for more information on the criteria that they used.

The objective of this chapter is to outline the methodology used for compiling the checklist and provide clarification regarding the inclusion and exclusion of specific items. As such it will provide a detailed justification for the texts included in the checklist, which is reproduced in the Appendix, that will in turn serve as the basis for the analysis of the texts in Chapter 3. We will start, in the first section, by clarifying the types of texts considered to be amulets and formularies. The second section identifies elements that are regarded as either explicitly Christian or with a high likelihood of being so, and that are therefore excluded from our list. It also explores the diverse traditional elements present within the magical texts that are included and discusses the difficulties in knowing for certain whether they were produced in a Christian milieu. The aim of this section is to clarify what this study defines as a ‘traditional’ amulet or formulary. This chapter ends by discussing, in the third section, the rationale for the exclusion and inclusion of specific items in and from the checklist.

Identifying Amulets and Formularies

One of the earliest mentions of the usage of charms in Greek literature is found in Plato’s *Charmides*, where Socrates provides Charmides with a cure for his headache stating ‘there was a charm that goes with the remedy and if one uttered the charm at its moment of application, the remedy made one perfectly well’.⁹⁴ Charms, like the one referenced by Socrates, were widely used across the ancient Mediterranean world and can be traced back to the ancient civilisations of Egypt and the Near East. By the time of the Hellenistic period and later the peak of the Roman Empire, the production and employment of amulets were flourishing.⁹⁵ Even with the rise of Christianity, amulets continued to be popular, now incorporating Christian

⁹⁴ Pl. *Chrm.* 155e; trans. W.R.M. Lamb, *Plato, Charmides* (Cambridge, MA, 1927) 17.

⁹⁵ For an overview on the development of amulets in ancient Greece and Rome, see, R. Kotansky, ‘Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Written Greek Amulets’, in C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York, 1991) 107-37 at 107-14, and now C.A. Faraone, *The Transformation of Greek Amulets in Roman Imperial Times* (Philadelphia, 2018).

elements. This practice continued to endure, despite influential Christian writers such as John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Caesarius of Arles denouncing it. A major cause for their long-lasting popularity amongst the populace was their deep-rooted tradition and versatile nature, which allowed them to be applied to address many of life's challenges.⁹⁶

From safeguarding and healing individuals to invoking curses and kindling desires in people, amulets possessed a wide array of purposes in antiquity. Additionally, amulets could be produced from many sorts of materials such as stones, metals, plants, animal and human bones, papyri and parchment. These amulets also took on a multitude of forms, extending beyond textual amulets to include rings, gems, nails, knots and numerous other shapes and objects. The diversity in the materials and forms of amulets was a result of the belief that any material or form could potentially house supernatural power. This absence of a rigid and universally accepted definition for what constitutes an amulet in ancient times is what contributed to their adaptability with various religious beliefs, cultures and traditions.⁹⁷ Therefore, just as in the preceding chapter with the exploration of the concept of magic, attempting to formulate a rigid definition for what qualifies as an amulet is unfeasible.

In a similar vein to magic, which, as we have seen in the first chapter, has been described as a type of ritual that involves the performance of certain acts, gestures and sometimes the utilisation of words and particular objects to attain a defined goal, the term 'amulet' can also be defined with a conceptual framework that aligns and is in agreement with the overarching concept of magic. For this reason, the term 'amulet' in this checklist shall be employed as an overarching term that includes an object utilised in magic to achieve a specific goal, typically related to protection, benefit or antagonistic effects. These objects were either

⁹⁶A discussion on the continued popularity and various perspectives amongst influential Christian writers regarding amulets can be found in, De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 18-30.

⁹⁷ On the versatility, different uses and materials of amulets, see e.g. C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor, 1950) 1-21; V. Dasen, 'Amulets, the Body and Personal Agency', in A. Parker and S. Mckie (eds), *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances* (Oxford, 2018) 127-35 at 128-9.

meant to be worn on the body or placed, fixed or deposited in some location.⁹⁸ The advantages of employing the term ‘amulet’ as an umbrella concept that intertwines with and builds on the proposed definition of magic lie in its simplicity and inclusiveness, which enables the inclusion of a diverse range of objects that may not neatly conform to rigid, predefined categories. Furthermore, this checklist includes formularies, defined as recipes for crafting charms and spells, as they, much like amulets, provide valuable insights into the continuity, change and evolution of various customs and traditions practised and utilised by both practitioners and their clients in Late Antique Egypt.⁹⁹

This checklist exclusively concentrates on amulets whose efficacy is derived from written incantations. The primary reason for excluding anepigraphic amulets is their absence of written content, which falls outside the scope of this study. The emphasis on written amulets is justified by the relative ease of interpreting them. Moreover, De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s study exclusively focuses on written amulets, which serve as a key point of comparison for the results of this research. In comparison, analysing an anepigraphic amulet is much more challenging. Consequently, anepigraphic amulets have been excluded from the study.¹⁰⁰ Collectively, these guidelines for identifying amulets and formularies establish a comprehensive and inclusive set of criteria that clearly define what qualifies as an amulet and formulary within the context of this checklist.

Discerning and Distinguishing Christian and Traditional Elements

⁹⁸ For more on the term ‘amulet’ see e.g. R. Wunsch, ‘Amuletum’, *Glotta* 2 (1910) 219-23; De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets and Formularies’, 168; Faraone, *Transformation*, 5-12.

⁹⁹ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets and Formularies’, 168. Note that, just like in De Bruyn and Dijkstra, the term ‘charms’, within this context, denotes the realm of positive magic such as healing, protection and so on, whereas the term ‘spells’ refers to antagonistic types of magic such as *defixiones*, love magic and so on.

¹⁰⁰ For more information on the different amulet types, see, R. Kotansky, ‘Textual Amulets and Writing Traditions in the Ancient World’, in Frankfurter, *Guide*, 507-54 at 507-9. This study specifically excludes his ‘unlettered amulet’ category.

As this checklist focuses on the examination of Greek formularies and amulets without Christian elements dating from the fourth to the seventh century, it is imperative to establish criteria for identifying Christian elements in order to make well-informed decisions about which texts should be excluded from the checklist. The main obstacle for this task arises from the challenge of identifying and isolating Christian elements during this period. After all, many producers of magical texts, during this time, drew from a rich plethora of traditions and integrated them into their amulets and formularies for their clients. The catalyst for this was the conquest of Alexander the Great in the Eastern Mediterranean, which ensured that the Greek language became a conduit for the crafting of amulets and formularies, now integrating diverse Eastern traditions of the people under Greek rule, such as Syrians, Egyptians, Jews and others.¹⁰¹ Following the Graeco-Roman period, amidst the ongoing religious transformation in Egypt with the gradual establishment of Christianity, Christian elements became integrated into that long-lasting practice of blending and incorporating various traditions for the crafting of amulets and formularies.¹⁰²

The primary challenge in identifying Christian elements comes from the uncertainty that can arise when a text incorporates a tradition shared by two cultures, making it difficult to be certain about the specific religious influence found within the text.¹⁰³ Magical texts, for instance, often include elements from Jewish culture, which are inherently shared with Christian traditions, mainly the Old Testament. A good case for this phenomenon is a wooden amulet from the fifth to sixth century that features four Judaeo-Christian angel names: Jophiel, Raphael, Michael and Gabriel.¹⁰⁴ The presence of these Judaeo-Christian angelic names suggests that it could have originated from either a Christian or non-Christian context and

¹⁰¹ Faraone, *Transformation*, 8-10.

¹⁰² De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 89-90.

¹⁰³ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies', 170.

¹⁰⁴ *SEG XXXI 1569 (80)*. As in this example, from now on items in the checklist will be cited by their main publication venue, followed by the number in the checklist in brackets and boldface.

highlights the shared religious traditions between Judaism and Christianity. While Jewish elements are often connected with Christian elements due to their shared tradition, excluding them from the checklist is challenging, given their common presence in magical texts without Christian elements during the Graeco-Roman period and into Late Antiquity. This continuity makes it uncertain whether a Jewish element was explicitly intended to be Christian.

By the fourth century, Jewish elements had themselves become an integral component of the Graeco-Roman Egyptian magical landscape of which they were a part of. Epithets such as Iao, Adonai, Eloai, Sabaoth, and numerous angel names, as well as the exploits attributed to the Jewish God and his prophets, by this time, are commonly found in most magical texts and artefacts. Although, many magical texts incorporated Jewish elements at that time, within this context, such Jewish features were transformed in meaning and integrated into the traditional pantheon. They served as customary elements that practitioners and clients could invoke alongside their traditional Egyptian and Greek deities, often without a true understanding of the exact meaning of the Jewish elements that they incorporated.¹⁰⁵ This is further supported by Lidonnici, who points out that many Jewish elements are at odds with each other in magical texts and would certainly not have been accepted by the ‘boundary-keepers’ of typical Jewish tradition.¹⁰⁶

Clearly, excluding magical formularies and amulets containing Jewish elements from our checklist due to their shared tradition with Christianity is not feasible, as by this point Jewish elements were deeply integrated into the traditional realm of magic. To address this conundrum, this study has chosen to exclude only magical formularies and amulets that include

¹⁰⁵ For more on Jewish elements in traditional magical texts in Late Antiquity, see G. Bohak, *Ancient Magic: A History* (Cambridge, 2008) 196-209. On practitioners’ lack of knowledge, Bohak notes in his work, their failure to consider the Jewish God’s claim to exclusivity highlights a lack of true understanding of the Jewish religion.

¹⁰⁶ L. LiDonnici, “‘According to the Jews’: Identified (and Identifying) ‘Jewish’ Elements in the Greek Magical Papyri”, in L. LiDonnici and A. Lieber (eds), *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden, 2007) 87-108 at 107-8.

explicitly Christian elements such as *nomina sacra*,¹⁰⁷ crosses, staurograms or Christograms, letters or cryptograms frequently used in Christian literature (such as α and ω and $\chi\mu\gamma$)¹⁰⁸, references to the Trinity, Christology, Mariology and hagiography, as well as acclamations or sequences from the Christian liturgy, and finally quotations and allusions drawn from both canonical and apocryphal Christian scriptures, narratives and *historiolae*.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, in this study, any amulet or formulary that lacks the previously mentioned Christian features is categorised as ‘traditional’ and included in the checklist.

The limitation of the provided parameters for determining what qualifies as a ‘traditional’ amulet or formulary is that, in many cases, there is no guarantee to tell if such texts were produced and used by non-Christians or Christians. After all, the proposed criteria for identifying a Christian element only take into account formal aspects of the texts that were prepared by the producers. They do not tell us anything about the religious beliefs of either the producer or the client. A similar problem exists with analysing client or producer names to learn more about their religious affiliations and the religious milieu, in which a magical text was produced and used, as names are not indicative enough to infer whether an amulet or formulary was intended for a Christian client.¹¹⁰ Accordingly, this checklist refrains from making assumptions about the milieu in which the amulets were crafted and on the religious affiliations of the producers and clients who created and used them. Instead, it simply displays all the amulets and formularies that do not contain any Christian elements.

¹⁰⁷ *Nomina sacra*, in this instance, refer to the abbreviations of specific names from Christian holy texts and manuscripts; for more on them, see, L.W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, 2006) 95-134.

¹⁰⁸ For more on the importance of letters and cryptograms, see, N. Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (Pennsylvania, 2002) 45-62. For a study on a Christian amulet that contains $\chi\mu\gamma$, see e.g. B. Nongbri, ‘The Lord’s Prayer and XMI: Two Christian Papyrus Amulets in Yale’s Beinecke Library’, *HThR* 104 (2011) 59-68 at 64-8.

¹⁰⁹ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets and Formularies’, 168-9.

¹¹⁰ Regarding the use of names as an indicator of religious affiliation in Late Antiquity, see e.g. G.H.R. Horsley, ‘Name Change as an Indication of Religious Conversion in Antiquity’, *Numen* 34 (1987) 1-17. For more on the constraints in using names to deduce the religious affiliation of clients and producers of amulets, see e.g. De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets and Formularies’, 169; W. Shandruk, ‘Christian Use of Magic in Late Antique Egypt’, *J ECS* 20 (2012) 31-51 at 35-8; De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 122-4.

The Inclusion and Exclusion of Specific Cases

Thus far in this chapter, we have established the criteria for selecting ‘traditional’ amulets. It is crucial to further discuss and provide justification for the inclusion and exclusion of specific magical texts. This section examines the exclusion of some amulets due to the presence of Christian elements, which were not part of De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s 2011 checklist. It also addresses the exclusion of amulets considered to be too ambiguous or unclear for inclusion in the checklist. This section concludes by explaining the rationale behind the inclusion of certain amulets in the checklist, even when their specific purpose may not be entirely clear. By examining these individual cases, the goal of this part of the study is to shed light on the decision-making process involved in the creation of the checklist.

Although De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s 2011 checklist provides a comprehensive overview of amulets and formularies with Christian elements at that time, there are two amulets that they have omitted.¹¹¹ The first amulet, which dates to the sixth-seventh century, contains *voces magicae* and mentions the city of Jerusalem. It also includes crosses in ll. 2 and 8.¹¹² The other amulet with Christian elements most likely composed by a certain Sabinos and dating back to the sixth century, features an inscription for a gravestone meant to curse the user’s daughter and son-in-law. In his later monograph *Making Amulets Christians*, De Bruyn states that it contains Christian phrasing and is likely associated with *Suppl.Mag.* II 59.¹¹³ Besides the omission of these two Christian amulets, it is worth noting that since the publication of De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s checklist more than a decade ago, a number of Christian amulets and formularies dating from the fourth to sixth centuries have been published.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ *PGM XLV* and *Suppl.Mag.* II 60.

¹¹² *PGM XLV*, with the comments at p. 179 (n. 2, 8).

¹¹³ *Suppl.Mag.* II 60, on which see De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 129-31.

¹¹⁴ E.g. *P.Oxy.* LXXXII 5306 (IV), 5307 (IV), 5309 (IV); *BKT X* 26 (IV-V); *P.Oxy.* 5311 (V), 5313 (V), 5314 (V), 5547 (V), 5479 (V-VI); *P.Monts.Roca* IV 62 (V-VI); *BKT X* 27 (VI); *P.Oxy.* LXXXII 5312 (VI), LXXXVI 5548 (VI); *P.Pintaudi.* 11 (VI); D. Minutoli, ‘Prescrizione magica contro la febbre con brividi’, in R. Pintaudi (ed), *Antinoupolis III*, vol. 2 (Florence, 2017) 579-86 (VI), and ‘Amuleto magico su papiro’, in Pintaudi, *Antinoupolis III*, 587-91 (VI).

Alongside the exclusion of Christian texts that do not appear in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, some amulets have not been included due to their obscure and unclear nature. A good example of this is a traditional magical applied amulet dating back to the sixth to seventh century.¹¹⁵ While this case appears to meet all the criteria for inclusion in our checklist, the amulet is primarily written in Coptic. At the bottom of the text, there may be some fragments of Greek, but the text is too fragmentary to say for certain, and as a result the amulet cannot be included, since this checklist focuses on amulets in Greek. Another amulet from the fourth to seventh centuries features a figure with isolated letters on its body.¹¹⁶ This amulet has been excluded from the checklist because the letters lack any discernible words, making it indiscernible as an amulet, while the figure's potential connection to magic also remains uncertain. Finally, a text whose date is uncertain but could be dated to the checklist's period has been excluded because of its unknown function.¹¹⁷ The text simply contains a figure and the word or name φοιβων, which makes it unclear whether this was a magical amulet or not.¹¹⁸

Amulets that clearly had a magical function have been included in this checklist, regardless of their uncertain or unknown specific purpose. A good exemplar for this is *PGM XLII*, a sixth-century amulet featuring magical characters and names, which qualifies it as a magical amulet eligible for inclusion in the checklist despite the fact we do not know its exact purpose.¹¹⁹ To address this ambiguity, the checklist categorises such magical texts as 'incantations', emphasising their magical nature without specifying their potential intentions, ranging from healing and protection to love spells and cursing. Moreover, amulets and formularies, which contain both Coptic and Greek have been included in the checklist as they

¹¹⁵ *PGM XLVIII*.

¹¹⁶ *P.Eirene 31*.

¹¹⁷ *PGM XXVd*. Note as well that the two texts *PGM LIII-IV* dating to the 'Arab period' have also been excluded due to their obscure dating as well as unclear function.

¹¹⁸ For the same reason the limestone fragment described in C. Piedrafita Carpena, 'Una tauleta màgica del déu Set procedent d'Oxirrinc (Proposta d'identificació i lectura)', *Nilus* 19 (2010) 29-31 has been excluded.

¹¹⁹ *PGM XLII (57)*. For more examples of such cases, see *P.Gascou 87 (46)*, *PGM XLI (56)*, *PGM XLIX (60)*, *PGM T1 (64)* and *SEG XXXI 1569 (80)*.

satisfy criteria of inclusion based on the presence of Greek writing.¹²⁰ Finally, two amulets with unspecified dates were added to the checklist, as they are attributed to the period of Late Antiquity.¹²¹ The inclusion of all these ‘traditional’ amulets is important as it provides as comprehensive a representation as possible of the diverse array of ‘traditional’ amulets and formularies that people in Late Antiquity created and employed.

Conclusion

The establishment and discussion of the criteria employed for this checklist are essential as they lay the foundation for the analysis of the data in the upcoming chapter. While it is true that no criterion is perfect and inclusivity may lead to a less specified focus and a risk of misinterpretation, for the purpose of this checklist, it is the most ideal choice. The flexible criteria for defining amulets and formularies ensure that no potential magical text is overlooked. These criteria maintain balance by excluding texts with Christian elements and requiring a feature that constitutes them as magical. The notion of considering a text as traditional, as long as it lacks Christian elements, is a useful approach for the inclusive representation of diverse religious traditions, from Ancient Egyptian to Greek and Jewish, in these amulets without overcomplicating their multifaceted background. Overall, the data gathered utilising these requirements will provide a detailed representation and permit a more in-depth analysis of the utilisation of magical amulets without Christian elements during Egypt’s religious transformation throughout Late Antiquity in the upcoming chapter.

¹²⁰ E.g. *GEMF* 53 (9), *GEMF* 54 (10), *P.Köln.* X 425 (70), *Suppl.Mag.* II 92 (102).

¹²¹ *PGM* XLVII (59) and *PGM* XLIX (60).

Chapter 3: Greek Magical Texts without vs with Christian Elements: A Comparative Analysis

Introduction

In one of his sermons, Augustine engages his audience with a story about a sick man grappling with a deadly illness, who is approached by various individuals imploring him to ‘tie on that amulet’ or to ‘let them apply that incantation’, so that he might become better. Despite the urging of those around him, the sick man refuses to use any incantation or amulet and, as a result, succumbs to his illness, and according to Augustine, his refusal to use any of the proposed non-Christian remedies allowed him to die as a ‘martyr’ and as one who ‘conquers the Devil’.¹²² This sermon by Augustine clearly demonstrates the church's strong opposition to the use of magical amulets in the daily lives of people. Nevertheless, despite the vigorous efforts by Church leaders to dissuade the use of magical amulets, deeming them ‘unchristian’, people persisted in using them as remedies for their own problems, so much so that it prompted Augustine to address this issue in his sermon.

The persistent usage of such remedies, condemned by the church, serves as the cornerstone of this chapter, which particularly seeks to delve into the prevalence of Greek magical amulets and formularies devoid of Christian elements in Egypt during Late Antiquity. By analysing the data from our checklist, we aim to illuminate any discernible patterns and trends in the utilisation of Greek magical texts without Christian elements during this period. Within the broader context of Egypt’s religious transformation in Late Antiquity, this study hopes to shed further light on any changes or continuity occurring within the content and utilisation of magical texts, specifically whether, with the growing influence of the Christian Empire, people begin to use and incorporate more Christian elements in their magical texts compared to those without. However, it is necessary to underscore that this chapter does not

¹²² Aug. *Serm.* 286.7; trans. E. Hill, Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Part III: Sermons*, vol. 8 (Hyde Park, 1994) 105.

attempt to make claims about the religious background of the users or practitioners of such magical texts. By avoiding the temptation to frame this discussion within the old scholarly paradigm of ‘Christianity vs ‘paganism’, as discussed in the General Introduction of this thesis, the study maintains its focus on the examination of magical texts themselves.

To achieve these objectives and offer a comprehensive analysis of the continuity and change observed in the magical texts of Late Antique Egypt, the data from our checklist is compared with De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s collected data on magical texts containing Christian elements. This chapter begins by offering some general information concerning the data obtained from our checklist, particularly providing details regarding the provenance and material of the magical texts featuring no Christian elements found in our checklist. Following this, a comprehensive comparative analysis of the dates of magical texts found in our checklist with the material found in De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s list is undertaken to highlight any discernible trends. The subsequent section conducts a comparative analysis of various types of magical texts and their intended purposes from both checklists to uncover any continuity and change in the utilisation of different types of magical texts with and without Christian elements over time. The chapter concludes by examining the traditional elements appropriated by practitioners in our checklist, further illuminating any patterns within our data.

Magical Texts without Christian Elements: Provenance, Material and Dating

While our checklist contains a good amount of data on magical texts not incorporating any Christian elements from Egypt, it is interesting to note that certain results do not unveil any discernible patterns. However, the emergence of such findings is expected, considering that, despite Egypt’s abundance of preserved magical texts in comparison to other regions in the Mediterranean, some pieces of information concerning these texts remain unknown.¹²³ For

¹²³ For more on the limits on sources found in Egypt, see Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 4-8.

instance, when analysing the provenance of Christian amulets and formularies featuring no Christian elements, the majority of magical texts offer little insight into where they were written. Even among the few that do provide such details, their scarcity is insufficient to establish a clear and noteworthy pattern. To offer a clear picture on this, the following table presents the results related to the provenance of the of traditional magical texts.

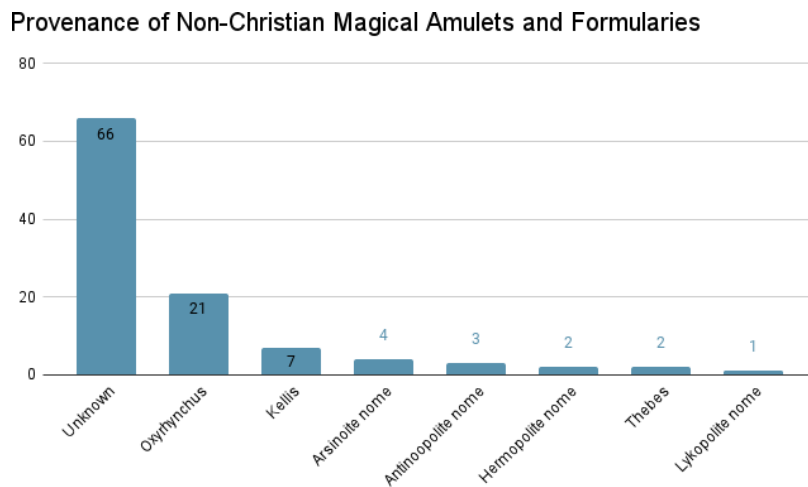


Table 1: Provenance of Non-Christian Amulets and Formularies

Clearly, as depicted in the table, from 106 magical texts 62.3 % of the material has an unknown provenance. Most of the data with a known provenance originate from Oxyrhynchus, accounting for 19.8 %, ¹²⁴ followed by Kellis with 6.6 %. ¹²⁵ A further breakdown reveals that the Arsinoite nome claims 3.8 % of the total, ¹²⁶ while the Antinoopolite nome accounts for 2.8 %, ¹²⁷ the Hermopolite nome and Thebes both share an equal percentage of 1.9 % each. ¹²⁸ The

¹²⁴ *GEMF* 45 (1), *GEMF* 46 (2), *GEMF* 47 (3), *GEMF* 49 (5), *GEMF* 50 (6), *GEMF* 52 (8), *GEMF* 62 (18), *GEMF* 65 (21), *GEMF* 69 (24), *PGM* XXVII (51), *PGM* XXVIIIa (52), *PGM* XXVIIIb (53), *PGM* XXXV (54), *PGM* XXXIX (55), *PGM* LXVI (63), *P.Oxy.* LXXIX 5205 (71), *P.Oxy.* LXVIII 4673 (72), *P.Oxy.* LXVIII (73), *P.Oxy.* LXXXII 5308 (74), *SB* X 10230 (75), *Suppl.Mag.* II 56 (98).

¹²⁵ *GEMF* 64 (20), *P.Gascou* 84 (43), *P.Gascou* 85 (44), *P.Gascou* 86 (45), *P.Gascou* 87 (46), *P.Kell.* I 86 (66), *P.Kell.* I 87 (67).

¹²⁶ *GEMF* 72 (28), *GEMF* 78 (33), *Suppl.Mag.* I 10 (84), *Suppl.Mag.* II 66 (100).

¹²⁷ *GEMF* 80 (35), *GEMF* 85 (40), *Suppl.Mag.* II 100 (104).

¹²⁸ Hermopolite nome: *GEMF* 66 (22), *Suppl.Mag.* I 42 (94); Thebes: *GEMF* 74 (30), *GEMF* 79 (34).

Lykopolite nome represents a very minor proportion, comprising only 0.9 % of the entire dataset.¹²⁹ Similar to the results of De Bruyn and Dijkstra, the data fails to reveal anything new regarding the broader geographical distribution of magical texts. In general, these findings are consistent with our knowledge of the typical distribution of papyri across the main cities of Upper Egypt, with Oxyrhynchus naturally standing out as the largest, given that it holds the largest cache of papyri.¹³⁰

When shifting to analyse the material composition of amulets and formularies without Christian elements, likewise nothing unusual stands out as can be seen in Table 2.

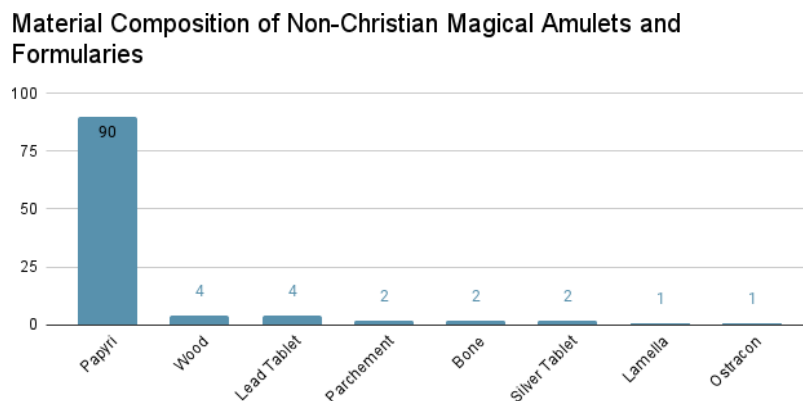


Table 2: Material Composition of Non-Christian Amulets and Formularies

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the magical texts in our checklist are written on papyrus, comprising 84.9 % of the total. Magical amulets made out of wood and lead tablets account for 3.8 % each of the whole dataset,¹³¹ while magical amulets made out of parchments, bones and silver tablets only make up 1.9 % each.¹³² Finally, one amulet authored on a *lamella* and a

¹²⁹ *Suppl.Mag.* I 45 (97).

¹³⁰ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets and Formularies’, 174. For more on the general geographical distribution of papyri for the period of Late Antiquity, see, Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 6-7.

¹³¹ Wood: *PGM* T1 (64) *SEG* XXXI 1569 (80), *SEG* XXXIV 1625 (81), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 4) (106); Lead Tablets: *SB* XXVI 16650 (79), *Suppl.Mag.* I 42 (94), *Suppl.Mag.* II 57 (99), *Suppl.Mag.* II 66 (100).

¹³² Parchments: *PGM* XLVII (59), *Suppl.Mag.* II 100 (104); Bones: *PGM* T2c (65), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 2) (105); (105); Silver Tablets: *P. Köln.* VIII 338 (68), *P. Köln.* VIII 339 (69).

formularium created on an ostrakon, each constitute 0.9 % of the overall count.¹³³ From the provided data, it is noteworthy to mention that almost all formularies, besides one (*GEMF* 79), are written on papyrus, while this one was the only one written on an ostrakon. Therefore, based on the available data, formularies were almost always written on papyrus. The other notable observation regarding the material composition of the data is that our checklist reaffirms De Bruyns and Dijkstra's claim that the use of parchment for amulets with Christian elements is correlated with the usage of biblical passages and prayers, since in our checklist, parchments are hardly utilised.¹³⁴

Before analysing and comparing the chronological distribution of the data within our checklist with that of De Bruyn and Dijkstra's, it is crucial to validate and refresh some of their findings from a decade ago to ensure the data being analysed are accurate and appropriate.¹³⁵ Firstly, when comparing the results of De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist with our own, only findings from their certain and probable lists with undisputable dates have been considered, given the higher level of uncertainty associated with the items on the possible list as amulets or formularies.¹³⁶ Similarly in our checklist, to ensure the highest level of accuracy, only findings with undisputed dates have been included in this section.¹³⁷ Keeping this in mind, some items from De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist have been excluded from comparison with our checklist as they do not fall within the period of Late Antiquity.¹³⁸ Furthermore, four items

¹³³ *Lamella*: SB XX 14986 (77); Ostrakon: *GEMF* 79 (34).

¹³⁴ De Bruyn and Dijkstra's two tables of certain and probable amulets together record 19 amulets and formularies in total that were created using parchment, see De Bruyn and Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies', 174.

¹³⁵ Note this study does not attempt to systematically update their list, as that falls beyond the scope of our research.

¹³⁶ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies', 174. Note that the actual count of fifth-century Christian amulets and formularies in their certain list is not 10 but 12 and the actual count for the seventh-eighth century is not 0 but 1.

¹³⁷ From our checklist, items whose exact date is unknown or dated to two centuries or more have been excluded from the chronological distribution comparison to ensure accuracy and reliability in assessing the chronological evolution of magical texts with Christian elements to those without. The excluded items are: *PGM* XLVI (59), *PGM* XLIX (60), *PGM* T2c (65), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 2) (105), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 4) (104).

¹³⁸ For instance, *Suppl. Mag.* 1.1 (60) in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's list has been excluded as it dates to the third century. Additionally, *PGM* XII.190-192 (12) and *PGM* XII.376-396 (13) have been excluded, as these two texts have been merged and are now recognized as *GEMF* 15, dating back to the second century.

in their checklist have been included but were subsequently redated due to the emergence of new scholarship regarding them. Two items in De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s list have been reassigned to the fifth century,¹³⁹ one item to the sixth century,¹⁴⁰ and one to the seventh century.¹⁴¹ Following these slight adjustments and refinements to De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s checklist, the ensuing table depicts the comparative results of the chronological distribution of both datasets.

Magical Amulets & Formularies: Christian vs. Non-Christian Elements Chronological Distribution

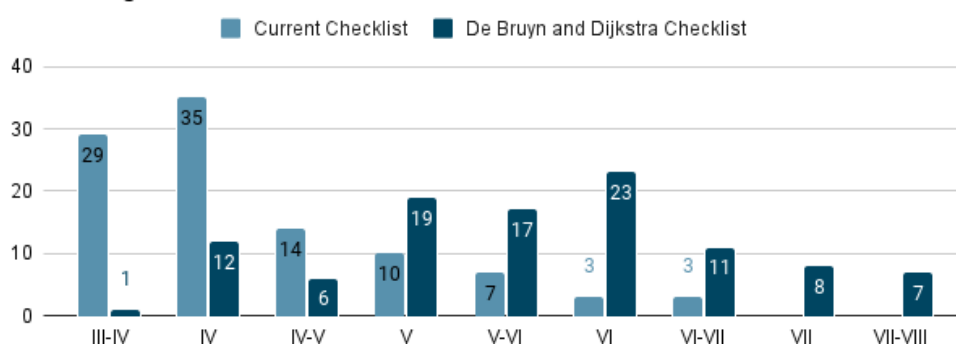


Table 3: Magical Amulets & Formularies: Christian vs Non-Christian Chronological Distribution

From the chronological distribution of the data, one can clearly see that over time, the prevalence of magical texts without Christian elements decreases, while magical texts containing Christian elements over time show an increase. In the third-fourth century 28.7 % of all magical texts without Christian elements surveyed are found, while in the fourth century the percentage climbs up to 34.7 %. When combining these two percentages, it results in two-

¹³⁹ *PGM* P13 (30) has been reassigned to the first half of the fifth century, see, A. Mihálykó, ‘Christ and Charon: *PGM* P13 Reconsidered’, *SO* 89 (2015) 183-209 at 184-5; *P.Oxy.* 34.2684 with *The Epistle of Jude* (Stockholm 2006) 51-72 (121) has been reclassified to the fifth century, according to, P. Orsini, W. Clarysse, ‘Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Palaeography’, *ETHL* 88 (2012) 443-74 at 459.

¹⁴⁰ *P.Ryl.* 3.471, with *JThS* N.S. 57 (2006) 94-109 (128) has been redated to the first half of the sixth century, see, A. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction* (Tübingen, 2019) 354.

¹⁴¹ *BJ* 168 (1968) 106, no. 9 (2) has been reallocated to the seventh century by L. Berkes, ‘A Christian Amulet and Estate Administrators in Seventh Century Fayum’, *APF* 64 (2018) 88-97 at 88-9.

thirds of all magical texts not featuring Christian elements appearing between the third-fourth and fourth century. In the fourth-fifth century the percentage of magical texts not incorporating any Christian elements drops to 13.9 % and in the fifth century it drops further to 9.9 %. Interestingly, as shown in our table, the number of magical texts without Christian elements continues to remain higher than those without in the fourth-fifth century, before being overtaken in the fifth century. By the fifth-sixth century, only 6.9 % is found of all magical texts without Christian elements surveyed, and in the sixth and sixth-seventh century, they reach lows of 3.0 % each, before disappearing completely in the seventh and seventh-eighth century.

In comparison, the opposite is almost entirely true for magical texts with Christian elements. As can be seen from the table, during the third-fourth century, magical texts incorporating Christian elements comprise only 1.0 % of the material from De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, while for the fourth century, they represent 11.7 % of the total, still significantly lower compared to magical texts without Christian elements in the same period. In the fourth-fifth century, the percentage drops once again to 5.8 %; it is only in the fifth century that magical texts with Christian elements surpass magical texts without Christian elements, constituting 18.4 % of all magical texts with Christian elements shown in the table. Throughout the fifth-sixth century, the percentage of magical texts with Christian elements drops slightly to 16.5 %, only to reach a peak of 22.3 % in the sixth century. In the latter stages of Late Antiquity, we see that magical texts with Christian elements begin to go down again, accounting for only 10.7 % of the total in the sixth-seventh century, 7.8 % in the seventh century, and 6.8 % in the seventh-eighth century. The cause for this drop is likely associated

with the emergence of Coptic and the decrease in Greek usage in Late Antique Egypt as well as the low number of papyri overall in the seventh century.¹⁴²

In general, the results from Table 3 reveal that magical texts without Christian elements were initially preferred for crafting amulets and formularies in the beginning of Late Antiquity in Egypt. However, over time, the use and creation of magical texts with Christian elements gradually increased, ultimately surpassing magical texts without Christian elements. When considering these results in the broader context of the study of Egypt's religious transformation, they align with other findings. For instance, a similar trend can be observed in other datasets, such as with temples in Egypt gradually falling out of use throughout Late Antiquity, instead of being violently converted into churches.¹⁴³ Even when analysing the emergence of Christian names, one can find a parallel pattern of a gradual increase within Egypt.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, when considering the results of Table 3 alongside the aforementioned evidence regarding Egypt's religious transformation in Late Antiquity, we can observe that this period is characterised by a cultural shift, with individuals increasingly incorporating and appropriating Christian elements for the production and usage of magical texts over time.

Continuity and Change in the Content of Late Antique Greek Magical Texts

When analysing the type of magical texts of both checklists, it is crucial to establish a proper system for comparison to ensure that the data is not skewed or misrepresented. Within De

¹⁴² For more on the emergence of Coptic and decline of Greek in Late Antique Egypt, see, J.L. Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity*, (Princeton, 2020).

¹⁴³ A good overview of this, based on a checklist with references to temples, churches and monasteries in the Oxyrhynchus papyri, can be found in A. Hidding, J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'A Skyline of Churches and Monasteries: The Changing Sacred Landscape of Oxyrhynchus in Late Antiquity', *Millennium* 19 (2022) 247–314.

¹⁴⁴ On the gradual rise of Christian names in Egypt, see, R.S. Bagnall, 'Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt', *BASP* 19 (1982) 105–24; For a reply to Bagnall's study, see, E. Wipszycka, 'La valeur de l'onomastique pour l'histoire de la christianisation de l'Égypte. À propos d'une étude de R. S. Bagnall' *ZPE* 62 (1987) 173-81 and in the reprint *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive* (Rome, 1996) 66-7, 103-4. For a reply to Wipszycka, see, R.S. Bagnall, 'Conversion and Onomastics: A Reply', *ZPE* 69 (1987) 243-250; For a more recent publication on the matter, see also, M. Depauw, W. Clarysse, 'How Christian Was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion', *VChr* 67 (2013) 407–35.

Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, notably in their Table 2, one finds a great number of amulets solely containing prayers, acclamations, Christian verses from the Psalms, New Testament or other Christian texts. Although one would assume that, in general, such passages would have had a beneficial or protective value, their exact purpose remains unspecified and would require an in-depth analysis of each item, which falls outside the scope of this study.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, these types of amulets, which were given an undisputable date have already been represented in Table 3 in the previous section to illustrate the overall increase of magical texts containing Christian elements over time. However, when delving deeper to compare the purpose of these amulets with the ones found in our checklist, their open-ended purpose could be misrepresented through a direct comparison with amulets whose motive is much clearer. Moreover, such amulets are incomparable with amulets within our checklist whose intention is unknown, since they serve a purpose that is not unknown but rather more general, likely providing some sort of benefit. Consequently, they have been excluded from any comparison in the rest of this chapter.

This section starts off by comparing the number of formularies between both checklists and, building on the previous section, provides a timeline to better visualise their usage over time. It then transitions to comparing the number of positive and negative magical amulets found between both checklists in Table 5.¹⁴⁶ Following this, Table 6 breaks down the precise purposes of all the positive magical amulets found in both checklists, such as for instance healing and protection. Meanwhile, Table 7, building on Table 6, provides a timeline for all positive amulets from both checklists with specified dates to highlight observable trends.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ In her article, Belanger Sarrazin classifies such Christian amulets as unspecified, as their purpose is not expressed explicitly, see, Bélanger Sarrazin, 'Catalogue', 375.

¹⁴⁶ Tables 5 and 6 include *Suppl.Mag.* 1.36 (77), a magical healing amulet listed in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist. Despite being written in Latin, it originates from the same context, and therefore, has been included to provide a more complete overview.

¹⁴⁷ The timeline presented in Table 9 exclusively takes into account healing and protective amulets. This decision was made due to the limited presence of other types of positive amulets, which fail to exhibit any discernible pattern or trend effectively due to their very small number.

The exact same is done for negative magical amulets, such as curses and love spells, in Table 8 and 9. Amulets whose specific purpose is unknown, categorised as incantations in our checklist as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, and amulets that could not be classified as having either a negative or positive purpose have been excluded from being represented in the aforementioned tables.¹⁴⁸

Keeping these preliminary remarks in mind, Table 4 compares and provides a chronological timeframe of the use of formularies between both checklists.

Christian and Non-Christian Formularies Timeline

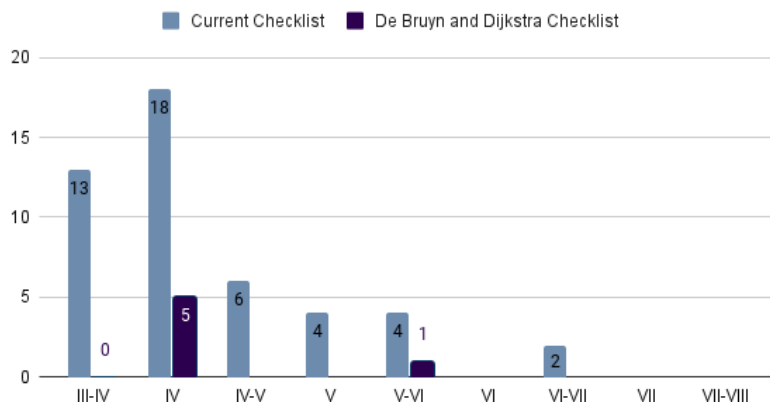


Table 4: Christian and Non-Christian Formularies Timeline

What immediately stands out from Table 4 is the large number of formularies without Christian elements, which, with 47 items out of 106, make up 44.3 % of all magical texts within our checklist. Comparably, the formularies with Christian elements, which are 6 out of 130, only make up 4.6 % of the total surveyed magical texts with Christian elements from De Bruyn and

¹⁴⁸ The following amulets from our checklist with an unknown purpose have been excluded from the positive vs negative magic comparison: *P.Gascou* 87 (**46**), *PGM* XLI (**56**), *PGM* XLII (**57**), *PGM* XLIX (**60**), *SEG* XXXI 1569 (**80**), *Suppl.Mag.* I 8 (**82**). Additionally, *Suppl.Mag.* II 66 (**100**) has not been included as it cannot be classified as either a positive or negative amulet. From De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist: *PGM* P11 (**28**) and *SB* 22.15234 (**131**) have been disregarded due to their unknown purpose.

Dijkstra's certain and probable lists.¹⁴⁹ The majority of formularies not featuring any Christian elements are dated to the early period of Late Antiquity, specifically the third-fourth century, where they make up 27.7 % of the total,¹⁵⁰ and the fourth century, where the number rises even higher to 38.3 %.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile, in the fourth-fifth century, formularies not incorporating Christian elements drop to 12.8 % of the total,¹⁵² and in the fifth and fifth-sixth centuries, the number falls even further to 8.5 % each.¹⁵³ In the sixth century, no formularies without Christian elements were surveyed. However, they resurface a last time in the sixth-seventh century, constituting a mere 4.3 % of all formularies within our checklist.¹⁵⁴

Conversely, the formularies with Christian elements in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's list are predominantly dated to the fourth century, with 83.3 % of all their surveyed Christian formularies emerging during that period.¹⁵⁵ Only one formulary is dated to the fifth-sixth century, comprising 16.7 % of all their formularies with Christian elements.¹⁵⁶ These results demonstrate how the use of formularies primarily occurred at the beginning of Late Antiquity between the third and fourth century, as well as the fourth century, with 67.9 % of all 53 formularies depicted dated to that period. On top of that, the results showcase how formularies rarely contained Christian elements. Among the 53 formularies shown in the Table, only 6 contain Christian elements, constituting 11.3 % of the total, while the remaining 47 formularies without Christian elements make up 88.7 % of all the formularies represented. Evidently, the

¹⁴⁹ The reason the total count of amulets in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist is considered 130 instead of 133 is, as previously stated, because *PGM* XII.190-192 (**12**), *PGM* XII.376-396 (**13**) and *Suppl.Mag.* 1.1 (**60**) have been omitted from the total count.

¹⁵⁰ *GEMF* 45 (**1**), *GEMF* 46 (**2**), *GEMF* 47 (**3**), *GEMF* 48 (**4**), *GEMF* 49 (**5**), *GEMF* 50 (**6**), *GEMF* 51 (**7**), *GEMF* 52 (**8**), *GEMF* 53 (**9**), *GEMF* 54 (**10**), *GEMF* 55 (**11**), *GEMF* 56 (**12**), *Suppl.Mag.* II 87 (**101**).

¹⁵¹ *GEMF* 57 (**13**), *GEMF* 58 (**14**), *GEMF* 59 (**15**), *GEMF* 60 (**16**), *GEMF* 61 (**17**), *GEMF* 62 (**18**), *GEMF* 63 (**19**), *GEMF* 64 (**20**), *GEMF* 65 (**21**), *GEMF* 66 (**22**), *GEMF* 68 (**23**), *GEMF* 69 (**24**) *GEMF* 70a (**25**), *GEMF* 71 (**27**), *GEMF* 72 (**28**), *GEMF* 73 (**29**), *GEMF* 74 (**30**), *SB* XXII 15233 (**78**).

¹⁵² *GEMF* 75 (**31**), *GEMF* 76 (**32**), *GEMF* 78 (**33**), *GEMF* 79 (**34**), *Suppl.Mag.* II 92 (**102**), *Suppl.Mag.* II 93 (**103**).

¹⁵³ Fifth century: *GEMF* 70b (**26**) *GEMF* 80 (**35**), *GEMF* 81 (**36**) *Suppl.Mag.* II 100 (**104**). Fifth-sixth century: *GEMF* 82 (**37**) *GEMF* 83 (**38**) *GEMF* 84 (**39**), *GEMF* 85 (**40**).

¹⁵⁴ *GEMF* 86 (**41**), *PGM* LXV (**62**).

¹⁵⁵ *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden 2002) 3-24 (**7**), *PGM* IV.1227-64 (**10**), *PGM* IV.3007-86 (**11**), *PGM* XIII.288-292 (**14**), *Suppl.Mag.* 2.89 (**82**).

¹⁵⁶ *Suppl.Mag.* II 96A (**83**).

absence of Christian elements in many formularies can be attributed to the majority of them being dated to the third-fourth century and fourth century. Their decreased usage in later periods could potentially signify a cultural shift, suggesting that people no longer sought to utilise and create such spell books, instead favouring the continued crafting and use of amulets.¹⁵⁷

When shifting focus to examining magical amulets with and without Christian elements, one discovers their enduring popularity compared to formularies. While formularies constitute 44.3 % of the 106 magical texts in our checklist, magical amulets without Christian elements, which could be classified as either positive (utilised for beneficial or protective effects) or negative (used for antagonistic effects), account for 48.1 % of the total as can be seen in Table 5 with 51 amulets.

Christian and Non-Christian Positive and Negative Magical Amulets Comparison

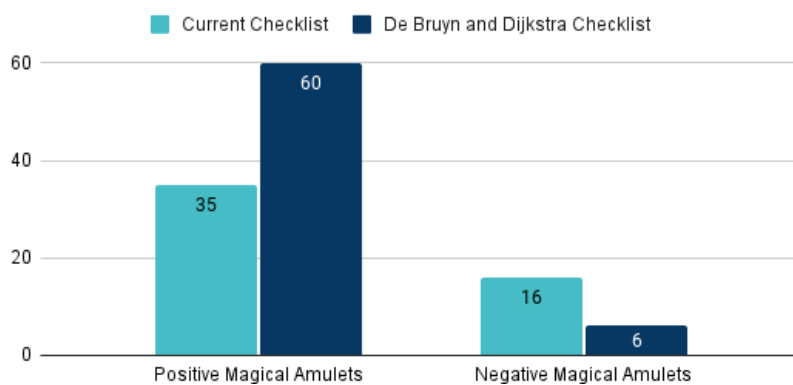


Table 5: Christian and Non-Christian Positive and Negative Amulets Comparison

¹⁵⁷ One must keep in mind that the so-called Theban magical manuscripts may be skewing the results for the third and fourth centuries, in that they may not be representative of a more general geographic distribution of formularies. For the latter centuries an accurate representation would also have to take into account Coptic formularies.

Furthermore, within these, positive magical amulets make up 33 % of all magical texts without Christian elements, whereas negative magical amulets constitute only 15.1%. In comparison, magical positive and negative amulets with Christian elements, out of the 130 magical texts in De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s checklist, constitute 50.8 % of the total, in stark contrast to the 4.6 % represented by formularies. Amidst these, positive amulets account for 46.2 % of the 130 surveyed magical texts, while negative amulets, just like formularies, constitute 4.6 %. From the 51 amulets without Christian elements in Table 5, 68.6 % are categorised as positive amulets, while 31.4 % are classified as negative amulets. In contrast, from the 66 amulets featuring Christian elements, 91 % are classified as positive, while only 9 % are classified as negative amulets.

When delving deeper to examine the specific purpose of the positive amulets, our checklist reveals that the majority are dedicated to healing purposes, followed by protective amulets, as depicted in Table 6.

Christian and Non-Christian Positive Magical Amulets Breakdown

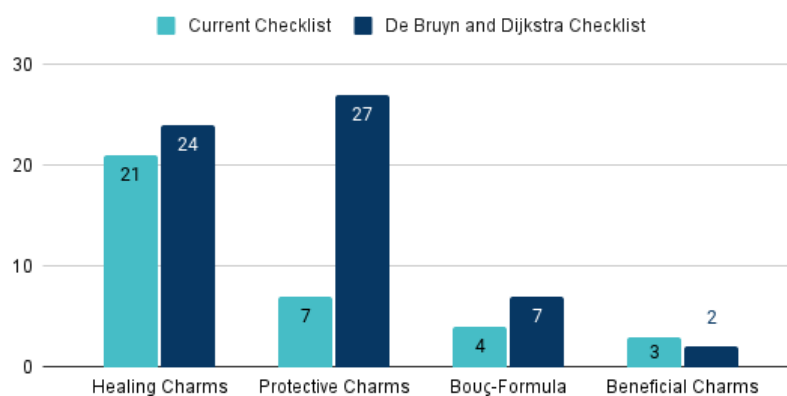


Table 6: Christian and Non-Christian Positive Magical Amulets Breakdown

Out of 35 positive magical amulets, 21 are designated healing charms, comprising 60 % of all positive amulets without Christian elements.¹⁵⁸ The second-largest group, consisting of 7 protective charms, constituted a notably smaller 20 % of the total,¹⁵⁹ while the 4 Βουϕ-formula in our checklist, represent only 11.4 % of the overall count.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, there are 3 beneficial amulets, which in this thesis are labelled as amulets intended to benefit oneself or others. In our checklist, they include two victory charms and a charm to encourage the growth of children, constituting 8.6 % of all positive magical amulets not featuring any Christian elements.¹⁶¹

Similarly, in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, one encounters a substantial number of healing charms, comprising 24 out of their 60 positive magical amulets, which accounts for 40 % of all positive magical amulets incorporating Christian elements.¹⁶² However, unlike in our checklist, there is a notable prevalence of protective charms in their compilation, with 27 out of 60 positive magical amulets, amounting to 45 % of the total.¹⁶³ The 7 Βουϕ-formula in their checklist account for a lesser 11.7 %.¹⁶⁴ Finally, the two beneficial amulets in their checklist — a charm to secure favour in one's affairs and another for good luck — encompass

¹⁵⁸ *P.Gascou* 84 (43), *P.Gascou* 85 (44), *P.Gascou* 86 (46), *PGM XVIIIa* (48), *PGM XVIIIb* (49), *PGM XLIII* (58), *PGM XLVII* (59), *P.Kell.* I 86 (66), *P.Kell.* I 87 (67), *P. Köln.* VIII 338 (68), *P. Köln.* VIII 339 (69), *P. Köln.* X 425 (70), *P.Oxy.* LXXXII 5308 (74), *Suppl.Mag.* I 9 (83), *Suppl.Mag.* I 10 (84), *Suppl.Mag.* I 11 (85), *Suppl.Mag.* I 12 (86), *Suppl.Mag.* I 13 (87), *Suppl.Mag.* I 14 (88), *Suppl.Mag.* I 18 (92), *Suppl.Mag.* I 19 (93).

¹⁵⁹ *P.Coles.* 11 (42), *PGM XXVIIIa* (52), *PGM XXVIIIb* (53), *SB XX* 14986 (77), *Suppl.Mag.* I 15 (89), *Suppl.Mag.* I 16 (90), *Suppl.Mag.* I 17 (91).

¹⁶⁰ *PGM T2c* (65), *SEG XXXIV* 1625 (81), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 2) (105), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 4) (106).

¹⁶¹ Two victory charms: *PGM XXVII* (51), *PGM XXXV* (54); Charm encouraging the growth of children: *SB X* 10230 (75).

¹⁶² *PGM P4* (19), *PGM P5b* (21), *PGM P5c* (22), *PGM P9* (26), *PGM P18* (37), *P.Köln* VIII 340 (45), *P.Mich.* XVIII 768 (47), *P.Oxy.* LXV 4469 (48), *P.Prag.* II 119 (49), *Suppl.Mag.* I 20 (61), *Suppl.Mag.* I 21 (62), *Suppl.Mag.* I 22 (63), *Suppl.Mag.* I 23 (64), *Suppl.Mag.* I 25 (66), *Suppl.Mag.* I 26 (67), *Suppl.Mag.* I 28 (69), *Suppl.Mag.* I 29 (70), *Suppl.Mag.* I 30 (71), *Suppl.Mag.* I 31 (72), *Suppl.Mag.* I 32 (73), *Suppl.Mag.* I 33 (74), *Suppl.Mag.* I 34 (75), *Suppl.Mag.* I 35 (76), *Suppl.Mag.* I 36 (77).

¹⁶³ *BJ* 168 (1968) 106, no. 9 (2), *BJ* 168 (1968) 107, no. 10 (3), *BKT VI* 7.1 (4), *MPER N.S.* XVII 10 (8), *PGM XXVIIIc* (15), *PGM P2* (16), *PGM P2a* (17), *PGM P3* (18), *PGM P5a* (20), *PGM P5b* (21), *PGM P5c* (22), *PGM P5d* (23), *PGM P6a* (24), *PGM P6d* (25), *PGM P9* (26), *PGM P10* (27), *PGM P12* (29), *PGM P13* (30), *PGM P13a* (31), *PGM P15a* (32), *PGM P15b* (33), *PGM P17* (36), *PGM P23* (40), *SB XVIII.13602* (54), *SB XVIII* 13746 (55), *Suppl.Mag.* I 24 (65), *Suppl.Mag.* II 84 (81).

¹⁶⁴ *PGM T2a* (42), *PGM T2b* (43), *REAC* 4 (2002) 93-94 (51), *SB I* 3573 (52), *SEG XXXI* 157 (57), *SEG XLVII* 2153 (58), *ZPE* 159 (2007) 249-252 (85).

only 3.3 % of all positive magical amulets featuring Christian elements.¹⁶⁵ Evidently, the prevalence of positive magical amulets with Christian elements surpasses those without, with this trend particularly noticeable in the category of protective amulets.

Upon analysing the usage of positive magical amulets over time in Late Antiquity, a clearer picture emerges, as shown in Table 7.

Christian and Non-Christian Positive Magical Amulets Timeline

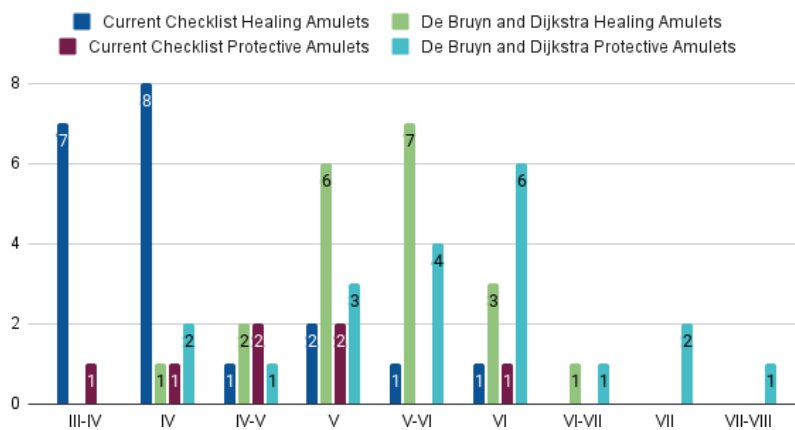


Table 7: Christian and Non-Christian Positive Magical Amulets Timeline

Starting from the third-fourth century, 7 out of 20 healing charms featuring no Christian elements are dated to this period, comprising 35 % of all healing charms without Christian elements with specified dates.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, 1 out of 7 protective charms is dated to this period accounting for 14.3 % of all dated protective charms without Christian elements.¹⁶⁷ In the fourth century, the percentage of dated healing charms without Christian elements increases

¹⁶⁵ Charms to secure favour in one's affairs: *PGM* P21 (39); Good luck charm: *SB* XVI 12658 (130). For a precise breakdown of the types of healing, protection, and beneficial amulets, see, De Bruyn and Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies', 176-77.

¹⁶⁶ *P. Köln* VIII 338 (68), *P. Köln* VIII 339 (69), *P. Oxy.* LXXXII 5308 (74), *Suppl. Mag.* I 9 (83), *Suppl. Mag.* I 10 (84), *Suppl. Mag.* I 11 (85), *Suppl. Mag.* I 12 (86).

¹⁶⁷ *P. Coles.* 11 (42)

slightly to 40 %, ¹⁶⁸ whereas the percentage of protective charms without Christian elements remains the same at 14.3 %. ¹⁶⁹ In the fourth-fifth century, the number of healing charms without Christian elements drops significantly with 1 out of 20 dated to this period, representing 5 %, ¹⁷⁰ while the percentage of protective charms without Christian elements rises slightly to 28.6 %. ¹⁷¹ For the fifth century, healing charms without Christian elements increase slightly to represent 10 % of the total, whilst protective charms without Christian elements remain steady at 28.6 %. ¹⁷² By the fifth-sixth and sixth centuries, protective charms without Christian elements disappear entirely, while healing charms without Christian elements appearing a final time drop to just 5 % each.

In comparison, De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist lacks any items assigned to the third-fourth century. In the fourth century, healing charms with Christian elements represent 1 out of 20 with specified dates, constituting 5 % of all dated healing charms incorporating Christian elements. ¹⁷³ Meanwhile, protective charms constitute 2 out of the 20 dated ones, accounting for 10 % of all dated protective charms with Christian elements. ¹⁷⁴ For the fourth-fifth century, the number of healing charms with Christian elements increases slightly to 10 %, ¹⁷⁵ whereas the number of protective charms drops to 5 %. ¹⁷⁶ By the fifth century, the number of healing charms featuring Christian elements significantly surpasses those without, representing 30 % of all dated healing charms with Christian elements, ¹⁷⁷ while the percentage of protective charms with Christian elements increases slightly to 15 % in the same period. ¹⁷⁸ In the fifth-

¹⁶⁸ *P.Gascou* 84 (43), *P.Gascou* 85 (44), *P.Gascou* 86 (46), *PGM XVIIIa* (48), *P.Kell.* I 86 (66), *P.Kell.* I 87 (67), *Suppl.Mag.* I 13 (87), *Suppl.Mag.* I 14 (88).

¹⁶⁹ *SB XX* 14986 (77).

¹⁷⁰ *PGM XVIIIb* (49).

¹⁷¹ *Suppl.Mag.* I 15 (89), *Suppl.Mag.* I 16 (90).

¹⁷² *PGM XLIII* (58), *Suppl.Mag.* I 18 (92).

¹⁷³ *P.Mich.* XVIII 768 (47).

¹⁷⁴ *PGM P3* (18), *PGM P5a* (20).

¹⁷⁵ *Suppl.Mag.* I 21 (62), *Suppl.Mag.* I 22 (63).

¹⁷⁶ *PGM P13* (30).

¹⁷⁷ *PGM P5b* (21), *P.Oxy.* LXV 4469 (48), *Suppl.Mag.* I 23 (64), *Suppl.Mag.* I 25 (66), *Suppl.Mag.* I 26 (67), *Suppl.Mag.* I 28 (69).

¹⁷⁸ *PGM P5b* (21), *SB XVIII* 13746 (55), *Suppl.Mag.* I 24 (65).

sixth century, healing charms featuring Christian elements reach their peak at 35 %.¹⁷⁹ In the same period the number of protective charms with Christian elements increases slightly further to 20 %.¹⁸⁰

In the later stages of Late Antiquity, as seen in the sixth century, healing charms with Christian elements drop significantly to 15 %, ¹⁸¹ making a final appearance in the sixth-seventh century, with 1 out of 20, representing 5 % of all dated healing charms incorporating Christian elements.¹⁸² Protective charms with Christian elements, reach their peak in the sixth century with 6 out of 20, accounting for 30 % of all dated protective charms featuring Christian elements.¹⁸³ By the sixth-seventh century, they drop again to 5 % and in the seventh century, they rise one final time to 10 %.¹⁸⁴ Finally, in the seventh-eighth century, they drop down to 5 % again.¹⁸⁵ The results from Table 7 highlight how positive magical amulets with Christian elements as time goes on become more numerous and take over protective and healing functions compared to those not incorporating Christian elements.

When turning to amulets with a negative purpose in Table 8, there is a notably lower count of both those with and without Christian elements.

¹⁷⁹ *PGM P5c (22)*, *PGM P18 (37)*, *P.Köln VIII 340 (45)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 30 (71)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 31 (72)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 32 (73)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 33 (74)*.

¹⁸⁰ *PGM P5c (22)*, *PGM P6a (24)*, *PGM P15b (33)*, *PGM P17 (36)*.

¹⁸¹ *PGM P4 (19)*, *PGM P9 (26)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 35 (76)*.

¹⁸² *P.Prag. II 119 (49)*.

¹⁸³ *BJ 168 (1968) 106, no. 9 (2)*, *PGM XXVIIIc (15)*, *PGM P2 (16)*, *PGM P9 (26)*, *PGM P13a (31)*, *PGM P15a (32)*.

¹⁸⁴ Sixth-seventh century: *MPER N.S. XVII 10 (8)*; Seventh century: *PGM P5d (23)*, *SB XVIII.13602 (54)*.

¹⁸⁵ *BJ 168 (1968) 107, no. 10 (3)*.

Christian and Non-Christian Negative Magical Amulets Breakdown

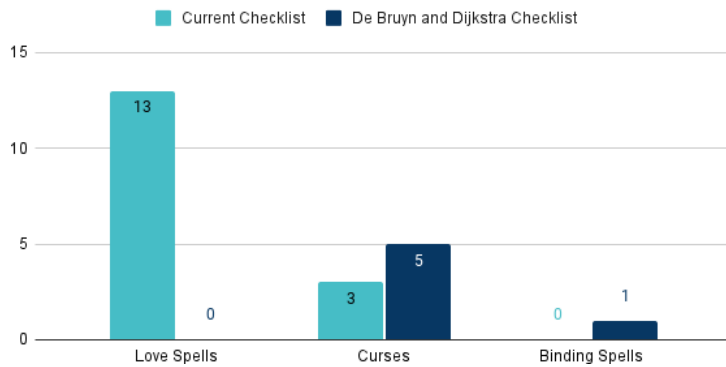


Table 8: Christian and Non-Christian Negative Magical Amulets Breakdown

As can be seen, the majority of negative magical amulets without Christian elements in our checklist are love spells, which with 13 out of 16, amount to 81.3 % of all negative magical amulets not featuring any Christian elements.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, in our checklist, there are only 3 curses, which comprise 18.8 % of the total.¹⁸⁷ In contrast, De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s checklist does not record any love spells. Instead, their study documents more curses than our checklist, specifically, 5 curses compared to our 3, which constitute 83.3 % of all surveyed negative magical amulets with Christian elements.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, unlike our checklist, their study records one binding spell, comprising 16.7 % of their total.¹⁸⁹ On the whole, graph 7 supports the scholarly opinion regarding the prevalence of negative magical amulets without Christian elements compared to Christian ones.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, based on our data, this disparity arises because De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s list lacks any love spells, unlike our list where the majority

¹⁸⁶ PGM XVIIa (47), PGM XIXa (50), PGM XXXIX (55), PGM LXIV (61), P. Oxy. LXVIII 4673 (72), P. Oxy. LXVIII 4674 (73), SB XX 14664 (76), SB XXVI 16650 (79), *Suppl. Mag.* I 42 (94), *Suppl. Mag.* I 43 (95), *Suppl. Mag.* I 44 (96), *Suppl. Mag.* I 45 (97), *Suppl. Mag.* II 56 (98).

¹⁸⁷ PGM LXVI (63), P. Oxy. LXXIX 5205 (70), *Suppl. Mag.* II 57 (99).

¹⁸⁸ PGM P15c (34), PGM P16 (35), *Suppl. Mag.* II 59 (78), *Suppl. Mag.* II 61 (79), *Suppl. Mag.* II 62 (80).

¹⁸⁹ PGM O1 (41). According to John Grager in J. Grager, *Curse Tablets* (Oxford, 1999), 209, no. 111, this binding spell’s immediate milieu is Christian. While De Bruyn and Dijkstra have included it in their checklist, they note that the binding spell may not have any definitive Christian elements, see De Bruyn and Dijkstra, *Greek Amulets and Formularies*, 190, no. 138.

¹⁹⁰ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets and Formularies’, 177.

of negative traditional amulets are categorised as such. When simply analysing curses and binding spells, surprisingly, there are more amulets with Christian elements with such a purpose.

When turning to the timeline presented in Table 9, it becomes evident that most dated magical amulets with a negative purpose are dated to the early period of Late Antiquity.

Christian and Non-Christian Negative Magical

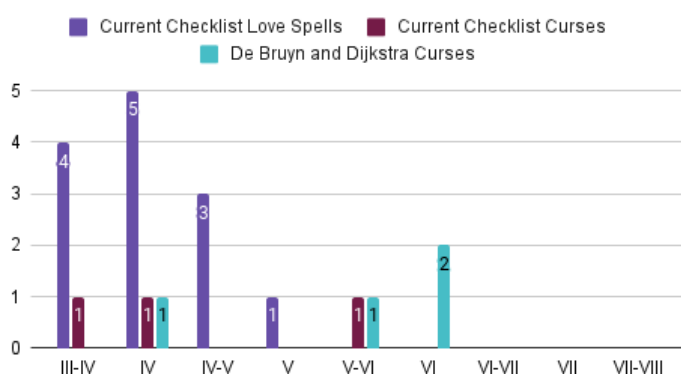


Table 9: Christian and Non-Christian Negative Magical Amulets Timeline

In the third-fourth century, 4 out of 13 love spells without Christian elements are dated to this period, accounting for 30.8 % of all dated love spells without Christian elements.¹⁹¹ From the 3 curses in our checklist, one is also dated to this period representing 33.3 %, of all dated curses not featuring any Christian elements.¹⁹² For the fourth century, love spells without Christian elements reach their peak at 38.5 %, ¹⁹³ while curses remain constant at 33.3 %.¹⁹⁴ In the fourth-fifth century, love spells drop to 23.1 %, and by the fifth century, ¹⁹⁵ with only 1 love spell dated to this period, they decrease further to 7.7 % before completely disappearing.¹⁹⁶ Meanwhile, curses without Christian elements make a final appearance in the fifth-sixth century,

¹⁹¹ *PGM LXIV (61)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 42 (94)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 44 (96)*, *Suppl.Mag. II 56 (98)*.

¹⁹² *PGM LXVI (63)*.

¹⁹³ *PGM XVIIa (47)*, *PGM XXXIX (55)*, *SB XX 14664 (76)*, *SB XXVI 16650 (79)*, *Suppl.Mag. I 43 (95)*.

¹⁹⁴ *Suppl.Mag. II 57 (99)*.

¹⁹⁵ *PGM XIXa (50)*, *P.Oxy. LXVIII 4673 (72)*, *P.Oxy. LXVIII 4674 (73)*.

¹⁹⁶ *Suppl.Mag. I 45 (97)*.

representing 33.3 % of all curses not featuring Christian elements.¹⁹⁷ For the 4 dated curses with Christian elements, the first one appears in the fourth century, representing 25% of all curses featuring Christian elements,¹⁹⁸ while the second one, dated to the fifth-sixth century, also constitutes 25 %.¹⁹⁹ Finally, in the sixth century, with 2 out of 4 curses dated to this period, we witness a significant increase, accounting for 50 % of all curses with Christian elements during this time, signifying that as time goes on more curses feature Christian elements.²⁰⁰

The results from the aforementioned tables are worth inspecting in detail as they reveal both continuity and change in the production and usage of magical amulets with and without Christian elements. First and foremost, Table 5 displays how amulets without Christian elements more often concern negative magic, while those with Christian elements are more associated with positive magic. For amulets with a positive function, Tables 6 and 7 highlight change, especially for healing and protection charms, which over time increasingly incorporate Christian elements, gradually overtaking those same amulets without any Christian elements. Thus, there is a transformation in how these positive amulets are produced, with the gradual incorporation of Christian elements into them. At the same time, this is a clear example of continuity, as the usage and production of such amulets for healing, protective, or even beneficial purposes continued without disruption in a period where Christianity was establishing itself as the dominant religion.²⁰¹

When turning to Tables 8 and 9, it is clear that most amulets with a negative function date to the early period of Late Antiquity and do not contain any Christian elements.²⁰² For instance, love spells exclusively do not incorporate any Christian elements and appear most

¹⁹⁷ *P.Oxy.* LXXIX 5205 (70).

¹⁹⁸ PGM P16 (35).

¹⁹⁹ *Suppl.Mag.* II 62 (80).

²⁰⁰ PGM P15c (34), *Suppl.Mag.* II 59 (78).

²⁰¹ A good discussion on this can be found in De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 89-99.

²⁰² Interestingly, the use of traditional deities in Coptic magical amulets also often involves negative magic, see, Bélanger Sarrazin, *Les divinités gréco-égyptiennes*, 78-130.

often between the third-fourth century and fourth century. This highlights continuity with the tradition of producing love spells without Christian elements, while also indicating change as love spells become much less common over time.²⁰³ For the production and usage of curses, similar to positive amulets but much less frequent, they initially emerge without Christian elements. However, over time, they gradually start to incorporate Christian elements and by the sixth century, they exclusively feature Christian elements. This underscores the continuity in the purpose of such amulets as curses, while also reflecting change through the incorporation of Christian elements. After all, despite this incorporation, such curse amulets persisted in their role as tools against competitors or prayers for justice, seeking divine retribution against wrongdoers.²⁰⁴ Altogether, these findings display how over time, Christian elements were appropriated into all sorts of magical amulets, transforming them while also preserving continuity.

The Appropriation of Jewish Elements and Graeco-Egyptian Deities in Traditional Magical Texts

In preceding sections, our focus has primarily been on comparing magical texts without Christian elements to those incorporating them. In this section, we will delve into the traditional elements that practitioners appropriated in our checklist. The purpose here is to better understand and shed further light on this longstanding tradition within which the gradual religious transformation of Egypt in Late Antiquity took place. Certainly, to ensure that the study remains focused and within its scope, certain parameters need to be established. Accordingly, this section will concentrate on just two, even if particularly illustrative,

²⁰³ This observation does not necessarily imply that Christians did not use love spells. In fact, on Christians utilising love charms, see, Shandruk, 'Christian Use of Magic', 53-7; De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 122-4.

²⁰⁴ For more on curses and prayers of justice, see, H. S. Versnel, 'Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers', in C. Faraone and D. Obbink, *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, (New York, 1991) 60-106.

traditional elements that practitioners appropriated, Jewish elements and Graeco-Roman deities.

Consequently, to achieve this goal, it is imperative to define what is meant by these elements. As demonstrated in the second chapter of this study, Jewish elements encompass Hebrew words and epithets such as Iahō, Adonai, Eloai, Sabaoth, and so on, angel names, the exploits and names of Jewish prophets, as well as any references to the Old Testament or their God.²⁰⁵ For Graeco-Egyptian deities, a text is considered to feature one when a direct mention, reference, or epithet concerning a Graeco-Egyptian deity is found. The reason the decision has been taken to only indicate the presence of a Graeco-Egyptian deity in Table 11, instead of listing every deity featured in our checklist individually, is because there are too many deities to mention, which could not be undertaken in the context of this study. By establishing such broad parameters, both Table 10 and 11 effectively illustrate the extent to which practitioners appropriated Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities in Late Antiquity, as well as the types of magical texts in which they appear.

Starting with Table 10, the prevalence of Jewish elements in certain type of magical texts compared to others is apparent.

²⁰⁵ For a good summary of the Jewish elements found in the magical papyri, see, G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York, 1965) 94-100.

Jewish Elements Traditional Magical Texts Dating to Late Antiquity

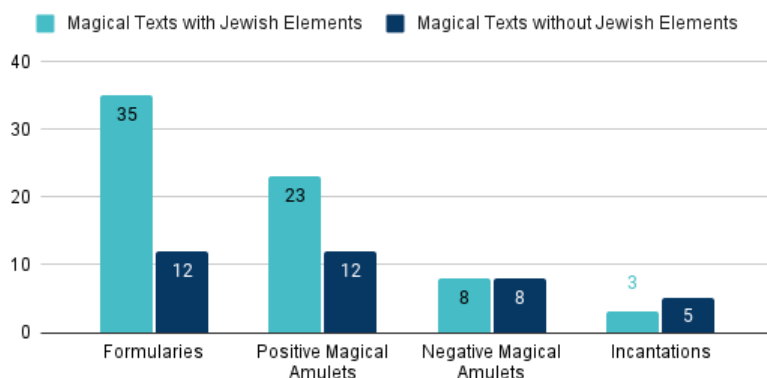


Table 10: Jewish Elements in Traditional Magical Texts Dating to Late Antiquity

In our checklist, 69 out of 106 magical texts, which is 65.1 % of the total, contain Jewish elements, while 37 out of 106, accounting for 35 % of all magical texts, contain no Jewish elements. From the 47 formularies, 35 contain Jewish elements, representing 74.5 % of all formularies in our checklist, while 12 out of 47 formularies do not include any Jewish elements, making up 25.5 % of the overall count.²⁰⁶ Magical amulets with a positive function, likewise, display a significant presence of Jewish elements, with 65.7 % of positive magical amulets in our study incorporating them, whereas 34.3 %, lack any Jewish elements.²⁰⁷ The percentage drops further when analysing magical amulets with a negative function, as 50 % of them integrate Jewish elements and the remaining 50 % do not feature any Jewish elements.²⁰⁸ Incantations, which are magical texts whose specific purpose is unknown, or magical amulets that could neither be classified as positive nor negative, those with Jewish elements comprise 37.5 % of all incantations found in our checklist, and 62.5 % are without Jewish elements.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ GEMF 46 (2), GEMF 51 (7), GEMF 52 (8), GEMF 56 (12), GEMF 59 (15), GEMF 63 (19), GEMF 64 (20), GEMF 69 (24), GEMF 75 (31), GEMF 85 (40), PGM LXV (62), *Suppl.Mag.* II 100 (104).

²⁰⁷ *P.Gascou* 86 (45), PGM XVIIIb (49), PGM XXVII (51), PGM T2c (65), *P.Kell.* I 87 (67), *P. Köln.* X 425 (70), *SB X* 10230 (75), *SEG XXXIV* 1625 (81), *Suppl.Mag.* I 14 (88), *Suppl.Mag.* I 17 (91), ZAC 11 (2008) 481 (no. 2) (105), ZAC 11 (2008) 481 (no. 4) (106).

²⁰⁸ PGM XVIIa (47), PGM XIXa (50), PGM XXXIX (55), PGM LXIV (61), PGM LXVI (63), *P.Oxy.* LXVIII 4673 (72), *Suppl.Mag.* I 44 (96), *Suppl.Mag.* II 56 (98).

²⁰⁹ PGM XLI (56), PGM XLIX (60), PGM T1 (64), *Suppl.Mag.* I 8 (82), *Suppl.Mag.* II 66 (100).

Evidently, our data highlights the widespread presence of Jewish elements in amulets, persisting into the early stages of Late Antiquity.

Transitioning from Jewish elements to references to Graeco-Egyptian deities in our checklist, we observe a different trend, as depicted in Table 11.

Graeco-Egyptian Deities Traditional Magical Texts Dating to Late Antiquity

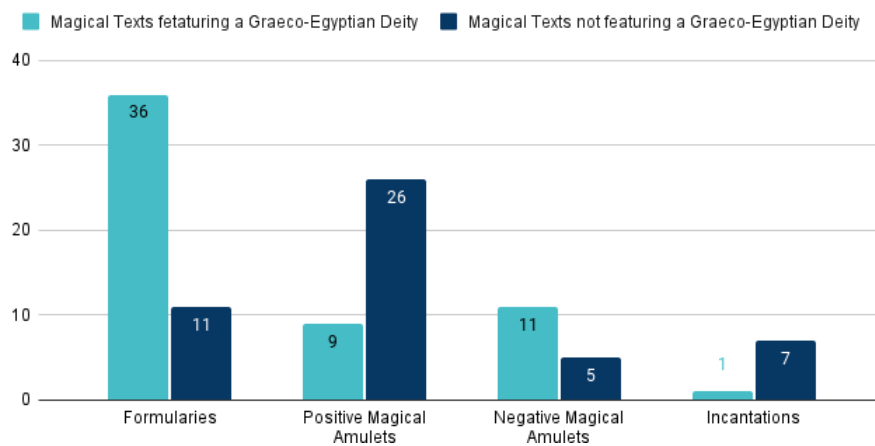


Table 11: Graeco-Egyptian Deities in Traditional Magical Texts Dating to Late Antiquity

Slightly contrasting the findings from Table 10, where 65.1 % of all magical texts in our list contain Jewish elements, out of 106 magical texts without Christian elements, 57 include a Graeco-Egyptian deity, comprising 53.8 % of all magical texts in our checklist, compared to the 49 constituting 46.2% that do not. Amongst the formularies, akin to the 74.5 % of formularies with Jewish elements in Table 11, 76.6 % of all formularies without Christian elements integrate Graeco-Egyptian deities and 23.4% do not.²¹⁰ However, unlike the 65.7 % of magical amulets with a positive function containing Jewish elements, only 25.7 % of all positive magical amulets without Christian elements feature Graeco-Egyptian deities and 74.3

²¹⁰ *GEMF* 45 (1), *GEMF* 49 (5), *GEMF* 63 (19), *GEMF* 64 (20), *GEMF* 78 (33), *GEMF* 80 (35), *GEMF* 83 (38), *GEMF* 84 (39), *GEMF* 85 (40), *PGM* LXV (62), *SB* XXII 15233 (78).

% lack any Graeco-Egyptian deity.²¹¹ When it comes to magical amulets with a negative function, Graeco-Egyptian deities appear in 68.8 % of all negative magical amulets without Christian elements, while 31.3 % of them do not incorporate any Graeco-Egyptian deity, compared to the 50 % of negative magical amulets without Christian elements that contain Jewish elements.²¹² Finally, only 1 incantation out of 8 includes a Graeco-Egyptian deity, accounting for 12.5 % of the total, whereas 87.5% do not mention any Graeco-Egyptian deity, in contrast to the 37.5 % of incantations that display Jewish elements.²¹³

When examining the results, the predominant presence of Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities within the formularies stands out prominently, which could be explained by the fact that such formularies typically encompass a myriad of recipes for various magical endeavours, thus utilising a diverse array of traditional elements.²¹⁴ While, for the positive magical amulets, a considerably higher proportion of them feature Jewish elements than Graeco-Egyptian deities. This observation becomes more intriguing when considering that, for negative magical amulets, there exists a slightly higher frequency of those incorporating Graeco-Egyptian deities over Jewish elements. For incantations, due to the prevalence of incomplete magical amulets with only fragmentary remains, the majority of them in our checklist lack Graeco-Egyptian deities and Jewish elements. As a whole, the results highlight how the adoption of Jewish elements and traditional Graeco-Egyptian deities continued to retain their significance in Late Antique Egypt, where Jewish elements are ubiquitous across the board, while Graeco-Egyptian gods are also frequently attested, albeit less likely to appear within a positive magical amulet than Jewish elements.

²¹¹ *P.Coles* 11 (42), *P.Gascou* 84 (43), *P.Gascou* 85 (44), *P.Gascou* 86 (45), *PGM* XVIIIa (48), *PGM* XXVII (51), *PGM* XXXV (54), *PGM* XLIII (58), *PGM* XLVII (59), *PGM* T2c (65), *P.Kell.* I 86 (66), *P. Köln.* X 425 (70), *P.Oxy.* LXXXII 5308 (74), *SB* X 10230 (75), *Suppl.Mag.* I 9 (83), *Suppl.Mag.* I 10 (84), *Suppl.Mag.* I 11 (85), *Suppl.Mag.* I 14 (88), *Suppl.Mag.* I 15 (89), *Suppl.Mag.* I 16 (90), *Suppl.Mag.* I 17 (91), *Suppl.Mag.* I 18 (92), *Suppl.Mag.* I 19 (93), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 2) (105), *ZAC* 11 (2008) 481 (no. 4) (106).

²¹² *PGM* XXXIX (55), *PGM* LXIV (61), *PGM* LXVI (63), *P.Oxy.* LXVIII 4674 (73), *Suppl.Mag.* I 43 (95).

²¹³ *P.Gascou* 87 (46), *PGM* XLI (56), *PGM* XLII (57), *SEG* XXXI (80), *SEG* XXXIV 1625 (81), *Suppl.Mag.* I 8 (82), *Suppl.Mag.* II 66 (100).

²¹⁴ Dieleman, 'The Graeco-Egyptian Magical Papyri', 307-16.

It is within this firmly established tradition of appropriating Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities that the incorporation of Christianity began in magical texts in Egypt. In De Bruyn and Dijkstra's list, according to their findings, a handful of amulets invoke the Christian God and his saints, alongside Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities.²¹⁵ Even though the usage of traditional deities and Jewish elements in these magical texts do not necessarily reveal the religious affiliation of the practitioners and clients, their persistent utilisation in the early period of Late Antiquity, and their later combination with Christian elements, highlights both change and continuity in the religious transformation of Egypt. The continued use of these traditional elements, even during Egypt's religious transformation, as seen in our checklist, most clearly showcases this continuity, while change is observed through the dynamic interactions and intermingling between Christianity, the emerging dominant religion, and the various religious traditions that existed for centuries prior.

Conclusion

All in all, this chapter illustrates, through the analysis of our checklist, how the usage of magical texts throughout Egypt's religious transformation, is characterised by both continuity and change. Primarily, the chronological distribution of magical texts reveals that those without Christian elements outnumbered those incorporating Christian elements until the fifth century. Subsequently, Christian texts began to gradually surpass those not featuring any Christian elements in number. This, on one hand, illustrates continuity, as evidenced by the persistent use of magical texts without Christian elements featuring Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities in the early period of Late Antiquity. Moreover, certain texts, especially formularies and negative magical texts, most notably love spells, predominantly remain without Christian elements, further underscoring this continuity.

²¹⁵ De Bruyn and Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies', 181-2. The following amulets are: *PGM* P2 (16); *PGM* P5a (20), *PGM* P6a (24), *Suppl.Mag.* I 20 (61), *Suppl.Mag.* I 21 (62), *Suppl.Mag.* I. 23 (64) *Suppl.Mag.* I 34 (75). If a dedicated study is one day done on De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, the overall number of magical texts with Christian elements featuring Jewish elements would likely be higher.

On the other hand, change is apparent by the downwards trend in the production and usage of certain types of magical texts devoid of Christian elements as Late Antiquity progresses, like the aforementioned formularies and love spells, who become increasingly rare by the later stages of this period, with little to no usage observed. Simultaneously, the heightened incorporation of Christian elements in positive magical amulets and even to an extent negative magical amulet such as curses compared to those without underscores this transformation in a period when Christianity is further expanding and establishing itself.

Although this study has contributed to furthering the scholarly understanding concerning the usage and production of magical texts during Egypt's religious transformation, it is important to acknowledge certain aspects that are beyond the scope of this investigation and thus warrant further exploration. First and foremost, one could update the checklist devised by De Bruyn and Dijkstra and conduct a deeper examination to determine the prevalence of Jewish elements in their magical texts. Moreover, one could delve deeper into analysing the individual Graeco-Egyptian deities that appear in both traditional and Christian magical texts, investigating whether any notable trends emerge. On the whole, besides shedding further light on the usage of Greek magical texts without Christian elements during Egypt's religious transformation, this study paves the way for additional research on magical texts to be done in order to better understands how the ancients used and perceived magic.

General Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, we highlighted the amulet PGM XXVIIIb, dated to the sixth century, which contains Jewish elements and invokes the god Horus for protection against scorpion stings. Rather than interpreting such an amulet through the old scholarly lens of a rare ‘pagan survival’, we chose to analyse it within the broader context of Late Antique Egypt’s religious transformation process, characterised by both continuity and change. This perspective led us to inquire about how the existence of such an amulet, during a period when Christianity was already well-established, relates to the usage of Greek magical texts without Christian elements over time in Egypt during the period of Late Antiquity. Accordingly, the research question for this study was defined as inquiring what development can be traced in the usage of these texts from the fourth to seventh centuries.

The basis for this study is formed by the checklist of Greek magical texts without Christian elements that is found in Appendix 1. To justify the inclusion of texts in our checklist, our study began, in Chapter 1, by defining the criteria for categorising texts as ‘magical’. Although, some scholars argue for the removal of the term ‘magic’ from academia altogether due to its imprecision and negative connotations, we advocate for its continued use as a heuristic tool. Our stance is supported by the fact that magic was not universally perceived as evil by practitioners and clients who engaged with it, as evidenced in late Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Furthermore, none of the proposed replacements for the term ‘magic’ fully encapsulate the diverse practices and beliefs that fall under its purview. Consequently, if we were to substitute the term ‘magic’, we would restrict our ability to understand how ancient societies perceived and comprehended ritual functions and practices they themselves labelled as magic.

Therefore, to effectively utilise the term ‘magic’ as a heuristic tool in our study, informed by an exploration of its historical development in the ancient world, we have defined magic as a ritual involving specific acts, gestures, and sometimes the use of words and objects

to achieve a particular goal. Building upon this, a comprehensive set of criteria for defining a text as ‘magical’ has been established. These criteria include: a clearly stated specific purpose, the presence of adjuration formulas, identification of any victim or beneficiary, inclusion of *historiolae*, ending formularies such as ‘now, now, quickly, quickly,’ as well as the use of *voces magicae*, *charakteres*, and *figurae magicae*. Our inclusive approach to classifying a text as ‘magical’ avoids confining us to a single rigid definition that may apply to one society but not others, allowing us to accommodate for all the diverse cultures found in a land like Egypt. Finally, when it comes to the study of magical texts, we emphasise the concept of appropriation, as it provides scholars with a useful framework to contemplate the individual agency and responses within the dominant culture for those utilising and creating these magical texts.

In Chapter 2, we expanded on the criteria for including a text in our checklist of magical texts. Appropriately, our study contains the parameters for identifying items as either amulets or formularies. We define an amulet as any object used in magic to achieve a specific goal, typically related to protection, benefit, or antagonistic effects, intended to be worn on the body or placed, fixed or deposited in any location. Additionally, our checklist exclusively includes amulets, whose efficacy is derived from written incantations. Formularies are defined as recipes for crafting charms and spells. The strength of our criteria is their simplicity and inclusiveness, enabling the incorporation of a diverse array of objects that may not conform neatly to strict, predefined categories.

In order to outline what we consider to be ‘traditional’ amulets and formularies, we clarify what this study identifies as Christian elements. Accordingly, for this study, any magical text including *nomina sacra*, crosses, staurograms, Christograms, letters or cryptograms frequently used in Christian literature such as α and ω or $\chi\mu\gamma$, references to the Trinity, Christology, Mariology and hagiography, acclamations or sequences from the Christian liturgy

and quotations or allusions drawn from both canonical and apocryphal Christian scriptures, narratives, or *historiolae* is considered to contain Christian elements and has been excluded, while texts that do not include any of these elements have been included. Moreover, certain amulets, such as *PGM XXVd*, *PGM XLVIII*, and *P.Eirene*. 31, have been excluded due to their obscure and ambiguous nature, casting doubt on their classification as magical texts. Other texts that clearly served a magical function, even if their specific purpose remains unknown have been included in our checklist. Such texts are categorised as ‘incantations’ to underscore their magical nature, while refraining from specifying their potential intentions.

In total, our checklist comprises 106 magical texts that do not incorporate any Christian elements. From our analysis in Chapter 3, we see that the majority of these texts (62.3 %), have an unknown provenance. Of those with known provenance, the largest group comes from Oxyrhynchus, accounting for 19.8 % of the total. The substantial number of texts from Oxyrhynchus aligns with the exceptionally high number of papyrus finds there. Our results also show that the majority of these texts, 84.9 % of the total, are written on papyrus, which makes sense considering that papyrus was the most common writing material in Egypt due to its availability and suitability for writing texts. Although nothing indicative stands out from these findings, they are consistent with current scholarly knowledge about the materials used for such texts and their distribution across the main cities of Upper Egypt.

Our checklist of magical texts without Christian elements builds on the earlier checklist by De Bruyn and Dijkstra, which collects all magical texts with Christian elements, allowing us to compare the information in both lists. When doing so, it is evident that our texts are primarily dated to the earlier period of Late Antiquity, while those in De Bruyn and Dijkstra’s checklist are predominantly from the later period. In our dataset, the majority of texts are concentrated in the third-fourth and fourth centuries. Specifically, 28.7 % of all texts originate from the third-fourth century, with this percentage increasing to 34.7 % for the fourth century.

Combined, this means that two thirds of all magical texts not incorporating Christian elements appear during this early period of Late Antiquity. By the fifth-sixth century, magical texts not featuring Christian elements become increasingly rare, with only 6.9 % of all magical texts without Christian elements originating from this period. This trend continues into the sixth and sixth-seventh centuries, where these texts reach a low of just 3.0 % each.

The opposite is true for magical texts with Christian elements in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, which are notably scarce in the early period of Late Antiquity, comprising just 1.0 % of their material in the third-fourth century, with this figure rising only slightly to 11.7 % for the fourth century. In contrast, during the fifth-sixth century, there is a notable increase in the presence of magical texts with Christian elements, comprising 16.5 % of the total and peaking at 22.3 % in the sixth century, demonstrating a significant uptick compared to the early period of Late Antiquity. Our findings reveal that initially, during the early period of Late Antiquity, amulets and formularies devoid of Christian elements predominated. However, over time, there is a discernible shift with amulets and formularies incorporating Christian elements becoming increasingly popular, eventually surpassing those without Christian elements.

When delving deeper into the types of texts found in our checklist, we have found that it contains 47 formularies, accounting for 44.3 % of all magical texts without Christian elements, while De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist features only 6 formularies, representing just 4.6 % of all their surveyed magical texts with Christian elements. Moreover, the majority of formularies lacking Christian elements are dated to the early part of Late Antiquity, with 27.7 % dated the third-fourth century and 38.3 % dated to the fourth century. Interestingly, we also observe that the majority of formularies with Christian elements are dated to the fourth century, with 83.3 % of all Christian formularies in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist originating from that period. Only one formulary from De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist,

representing 16.7 % of all formularies with Christian elements, is dated to the fifth-sixth century. Our study demonstrates how formularies were primarily used at the beginning of Late Antiquity, between the third- fourth and fourth centuries, with 67.9 % of all 53 formularies dated to that period. Additionally, Christian elements are rare, appearing in only 6 formularies, making up 11.3 % of the total, while the remaining 47 formularies representing 88.7 % of the overall count, lack Christian elements.

For magical amulets in our checklist, those classified as either positive (utilised for beneficial or protective effects) or negative (used for antagonistic effects) with 51 out of 106 magical texts represent 48.1 % of all magical texts without Christian elements, while in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, they constitute 50.8 % of all magical texts with Christian elements. From the 51 magical amulets in our checklist, 68.6 % are categorised as positive amulets, while 31.4 % are classified as negative amulets. In De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, out of 66 surveyed amulets, 91 % are classified as positive, while only 9 % are classified as negative amulets. Our results thus illustrate that negative magical amulets rarely incorporate Christian elements, whereas positive magical amulets are much more likely to include them.

From the 35 positive magical amulets found in our checklist, 60 % are classified as healing charms, 20 % as protective charms, 11.4 % as ΒουϚ-formula, and 8.6 % as beneficial amulets, which in our study represent other positive amulets intended to benefit oneself or others. In De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, healing charms comprise 40 % of all their 60 positive magical amulets with Christian elements, while protective charms account for 45 %, ΒουϚ-formula for 11.7 %, and beneficial amulets for 3.3 %. When inspecting the usage of healing and protective charms over time in our checklist, the two largest subsets of positive magical amulets, our analysis illustrates a clear drop in their usage over time. Most healing charms without Christian elements are predominantly dated to the third-fourth century with 35 % and the fourth century with 40 % of them assigned to that period. By the fifth-sixth and sixth

centuries, we see their representation drops significantly to only 5% each among all dated healing charms without Christian elements. Out of the 7 protective charms without Christian elements, the majority are predominantly dated to the fourth-fifth century and fifth century, comprising 28.6 % each of all dated protective charms without Christian elements. However, by the fifth-sixth and sixth centuries, they disappear altogether.

Compared with De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist, our study highlights how the opposite phenomenon is unfolding for healing and protective charms with Christian elements. Their checklist does not include any healing or protective charms with Christian elements dated to the third-fourth century. For the fourth century, healing charms with Christian elements account for only 5 % of all dated healing charms incorporating Christian elements, while protective charms with Christian elements represent only 10 % of all dated protective charms with Christian elements. However, by the fifth century the number of healing charms featuring Christian elements significantly increases to 30 % and they reach their peak by the fifth-sixth century with 35 % of all dated healing charms featuring Christian elements dated to that period. Likewise, protective charms with Christian elements increase in the later stages of Late Antiquity, rising to 20 % in the fifth-sixth century and by the sixth century reach their peak, representing 30 % all dated protective charms featuring Christian elements. Our findings demonstrate that, over time, positive magical amulets increasingly incorporate Christian elements, gradually taking over healing and protective functions compared to those without Christian elements.

For the negative magical amulets found in our checklist, we see that out of 16 negative magical amulets, 81.3% are classified as love spells, while 18.8 % are categorised as curses. Meanwhile, in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist there are no love spells. Instead, among the six negative magical amulets with Christian elements, a significant 83.3 % are curses, and the remaining 16.7 % is represented by a single binding spell. As shown in our study, most of the

love spells in our checklist are dated to the third-fourth century, accounting for 30.8 % of total, and the fourth century, which comprise 38.5 %. Additionally, 66 % of curses without Christian elements in our checklist are dated to the third-fourth and fourth centuries. By the sixth century, neither curses nor love spells without Christian elements appear anymore. The limited number of curses found in De Bruyn and Dijkstra's checklist reveal a complete opposite pattern, with one curse appearing in the fourth century, constituting 25 % of all dated curses, while the majority of the remaining 75 % appear in the fifth-sixth and sixth centuries. From these findings, our study highlights that the majority of negative magical amulets are dated to the early period of Late Antiquity and that as time progresses, these amulets become less frequent, with curses specifically increasingly likely to incorporate Christian elements.

When delving into the traditional elements found in our checklist, particularly the Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities, two aspects we have selected out of a wide scale of options, we see that 65.1 % of the 106 magical texts without Christian elements include Jewish elements, while 53.8 % of all magical texts incorporate a Graeco-Egyptian deity. Among these, 74.5 % of formularies, 65.7 % of magical amulets with a positive function, 50 % of magical amulets with a negative function, and 37.5 % of all incantations without Christian elements contain Jewish elements. Our results highlight the ubiquitous presence of Jewish elements across our checklist, particularly in formularies and positive magical amulets, where they are most prevalent.

Conversely, 76.6 % of formularies, 25.7 % of magical amulets with a positive function, 68.8 % of magical amulets with a negative function, and 12.5 % of all incantations without Christian elements feature a Graeco-Egyptian deity. Similarly to Jewish elements, the high presence of Graeco-Egyptian deities in formularies without Christian elements is likely due to the diverse range of recipes for various magical endeavours that these formularies encompass. Furthermore, our findings also reveal that very few positive magical amulets contain Graeco-

Egyptian deities. Instead, they are predominantly featured in negative magical amulets and formularies. As a whole, we see that Jewish elements and traditional Graeco-Egyptian deities maintained significance in Greek magical texts without Christian elements during Late Antiquity. While Jewish elements are generally prevalent, Graeco-Egyptian gods, though frequently attested, are less likely to appear within positive magical amulets.

In the grand scheme of things, our study highlights how the development of magical texts throughout Egypt's religious transformation is characterised by both continuity and change. On one hand, we observe change in the usage of magical texts without Christian elements, predominantly dating to the third-fourth and fourth centuries, after which their prevalence goes down as Christian elements gradually become more integrated, particularly noticeable in positive magical amulets. On the other hand, we witness continuity in the ongoing use and production of these positive amulets, which maintain the same purposes of healing, protection, and other beneficial functions as those without Christian elements. When it comes to negative magical amulets and formularies, our study also illuminates both continuity and change. Notably, we observe continuity in the absence of Christian elements in love spells and the majority of formularies, with both continuing to mostly solely incorporate Jewish elements and Graeco-Egyptian deities and other non-Christian elements. However, we also witness change as their prevalence significantly drops over time in Late Antiquity.

Moreover, the findings from our analysis of magical texts without Christian elements serve as compelling cases illustrating the concepts of appropriation and lived religion discussed in Chapter 1. The transformation of these magical texts over time in Late Antique Egypt, characterised by both continuity and change, demonstrates the practical and dynamic ways in which these texts were appropriated. Their evolution throughout Late Antiquity underscores that the creation and use of such texts were not static but were continually shaped and redefined by individual agency. This agency unfolded within the backdrop of the dominant culture, in

this case Christianity, which influenced the crafting and usage of these magical texts over time. During the period of Christianity's establishment in Egypt, the evolution of these magical texts reflects a diverse range of responses to Christianity's dominance, exemplifying the concept of appropriation. Our study demonstrates this, showing that in the early part of Late Antiquity, professionals making the amulets chose to exclude Christian elements. Over time, however, they gradually began to incorporate Christian elements, highlighting a dynamic shift in their interaction with the prevailing cultural influence.

For the future, we hope that our study and checklist of magical texts devoid of Christian elements will pave the way for further research in the field of magical texts. For instance, a similar study to ours could be undertaken with anepigraphic amulets dating to Late Antiquity to determine whether a comparable development occurs. The same analysis could likewise be conducted on Coptic magical texts compared with our findings to identify any notable patterns. Additionally, our checklist could be compared with earlier magical texts predating the Late Antiquity period to identify any similarities and differences. Overall, we hope our study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the development of magical texts without Christian elements in Late Antique Egypt and will foster further scholarly exploration on this topic.

Appendix:
**A Checklist of Greek Amulets and Formularies without Christian Elements
from Late Antiquity**

No.	Reference	TM #	Material	Date	Context	Provenance
1	<i>GEMF 45</i> (<i>JHS</i> 62 [1942] 36-7 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 88)	64483	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	Oxyrhynchus
2	<i>GEMF 46</i> (<i>P.Oxy.</i> LVI 3835 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 86)	64337	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	Oxyrhynchus
3	<i>GEMF 47</i> (<i>P.Oxy.</i> LVI 3931)	30769	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	Oxyrhynchus
4	<i>GEMF 48</i> (<i>ZPE</i> 194 [2015] 183-7)	397803	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	
5	<i>GEMF 49</i> (<i>PGM XLIV</i> = <i>P.Messeri</i> 22)	64040	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	Oxyrhynchus
6	<i>GEMF 50</i> (<i>ZPE</i> 8 [1971] 199-206 = <i>PGM</i> LXVII)	63028	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	Oxyrhynchus
7	<i>GEMF 51</i> (<i>APF</i> 36 [1990] 49-74)	63970	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	
8	<i>GEMF 52</i> (<i>P.Oxy.</i> VI 886 = <i>PGM XXIVa</i>)	64001	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	Oxyrhynchus
9	<i>GEMF 53</i> (<i>PGM LXXIX</i> = <i>P.Prag</i> I 4) ²¹⁶	64344	papyrus	III- IV	formularly	

²¹⁶ This formulary is bilingual and contains both Coptic and Greek.

10	<i>GEMF 54</i> (<i>PGM LXXX = P.Prag. I 5</i>) ²¹⁷	64345	papyrus	III-IV	formulary	
11	<i>GEMF 55</i> (<i>PGM III</i>)	64511	papyrus	III-IV	formulary	
12	<i>GEMF 56</i> (<i>P.Mich. III 154 = PGM LXX = ZPE 136 [2001] 186-93</i>)	64326	papyrus	III-IV	formulary	
13	<i>GEMF 57</i> (<i>PGM IV.26-94, 154-1226, 1265-3006, 3086-254</i>) ²¹⁸	64343	papyrus	IV	formulary	
14	<i>GEMF 58</i> (<i>P.Lond. I 46 = PGM V</i>)	64368	papyrus	IV	formulary	
15	<i>GEMF 59</i> (<i>P.Holm. = PGM Va</i>)	64429	papyrus	IV	formulary	
16	<i>GEMF 60</i> (<i>P.Leid. I 395 = PGM XIII.1-287, 293-1077</i>) ²¹⁹	64446	papyrus	IV	formulary	
17	<i>GEMF 61</i> (<i>PGM XXIIb</i>)	64376	papyrus	IV	formulary	
18	<i>GEMF 62</i> (<i>P.Oxy. XXXVI 2753 = Suppl.Mag. II 90</i>)	64487	papyrus	IV	formulary	Oxyrhynchus

²¹⁷ Bilingual formulary containing both Coptic and Greek.

²¹⁸ There are two formularies in this handbook that contain Christian elements: *PGM IV* 1227-64 and 3007-86, see De Bruyn and Dijkstra, *Greek Amulets*, 184-5 (nos 10-11). Additionally, *PGM IV.1-25* and 94-153 are written in Old Coptic, see M. Meyer, R. Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco, 1994) 22-5 (nos 2-3).

²¹⁹ One of the formularies in this handbook has Christian elements: *PGM XIII* 288-92, see De Bruyn and Dijkstra, *Greek Amulets*, 186-7 (no. 13).

19	<i>GEMF 63</i> (<i>P.Coles. 12</i>) ²²⁰	697533	papyrus	IV	formulary	
20	<i>GEMF 64</i> (<i>P.Kell. I 85 a-b</i>)	64442	papyrus	IV	formulary	Kellis
21	<i>GEMF 65</i> (<i>P.Oxy. XII 1566</i> = <i>PGM LXXXI</i>)	64393	papyrus	IV	formulary	Oxyrhynchus
22	<i>GEMF 66</i> (<i>PGM XXIIa</i> = <i>SB XX 14231</i> + <i>14232</i>)	61010	papyrus	IV	formulary	Hermopolite nome
23	<i>GEMF 68</i> (<i>P.Oslo I 1</i> = <i>PGM XXXVI</i>)	64479	papyrus	IV	formulary	
24	<i>GEMF 69</i> (<i>P.Oslo I 3</i> = <i>PGM XXXVIII</i>)	64480	papyrus	IV	formulary	Oxyrhynchus
25	<i>GEMF 70a</i> (<i>P.Land. V 85</i> = <i>PGM LVIII</i>)	64425	papyrus	IV	formulary	
26	<i>GEMF 70b</i> (<i>P.Laur. IV 148</i> = <i>Suppl.Mag. II 95</i>)	64731	papyrus	V	formulary	
27	<i>GEMF 71</i> (<i>PSI XV 1496</i>)	113246	papyrus	IV	formulary	
28	<i>GEMF 72</i> (<i>P.Lond. I 122</i> = <i>PGM VIII</i>)	59324	papyrus	IV	formulary	Arsinoite nome
29	<i>GEMF 73</i> (<i>P.Lond. I 123</i> = <i>PGM IX</i>)	64577	papyrus	IV	formulary	
30	<i>GEMF 74</i>	60204	papyrus	IV	formulary	Thebes

²²⁰ While the phrasing in ll. 6 and 7 of this papyrus may echo Christian usage, there is nothing that is specifically Christian in the invocation, adjuration or symbolism of the text.

	(<i>P.Lond.</i> I 121 = <i>PGM VII</i>)					
31	<i>GEMF 75</i> (<i>P.Lond.</i> I 125 = <i>PGM XIa</i>)	64578	papyrus	IV- V	formulary	
32	<i>GEMF 76</i> (<i>P.Lond.</i> I 124 = <i>PGM X</i>)	64532	papyrus	IV- V	formulary	
33	<i>GEMF 78</i> (<i>ZPE</i> 194 [2015] 177-83)	397802	papyrus	IV- V	formulary	Arsinoite nome
34	<i>GEMF 79</i> (<i>OBodl.</i> II 2180 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 58)	92334	ostrakon	IV- V	formulary	Thebes
35	<i>GEMF 80</i> (<i>P.Ant.</i> II 66 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 94)	64757	papyrus	V	formulary	Antinoopolite nome
36	<i>GEMF 81</i> (<i>P.Rain.</i> 12 = <i>PGM XLVI</i>)	64775	papyrus	V	formulary	
37	<i>GEMF 82</i> (<i>SCO</i> 29 [1979] 59-93 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 96B-F) ²²¹	92257	papyrus	V- VI	formulary	
38	<i>GEMF 83</i> (<i>SCO</i> 29 [1979] 94-112 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 97)	65848	papyrus	V- VI	formulary	

²²¹ *GEMF 82* contains a group of six interrelated texts that all derive from the same workshop, and so are *GEMF 83-4* (nos **38-9** below). Of these, no. A has Christian elements, see De Bruyn and Dijkstra, *Greek Amulets*, 194 (no. 83).

39	<i>GEMF</i> 84 (<i>SCO</i> 29 [1979] 113-20 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 98.1-6) ²²²	65849 65850 65851 65852 65853 65854	papyrus	V- VI	formulary	
40	<i>GEMF</i> 85 (<i>P.Ant.</i> III 140 = <i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 99)	64896	papyrus	V- VI	formulary	Antinoopolite nome
41	<i>GEMF</i> 86 (<i>P.Rain.Cent.</i> 39)	64942	papyrus	VI- VII	formulary	
42	<i>P.Coles</i> 11	697532	papyrus	III- IV	protective charm	
43	<i>P.Gascou</i> 84	702584	papyrus	IV	healing charm (fever)	Kellis
44	<i>P.Gascou</i> 85	702585	papyrus	IV	healing charm (fever)	Kellis
45	<i>P.Gascou</i> 86	702586	papyrus	IV	healing charm (fever)	Kellis
46	<i>P.Gascou</i> 87	702587	papyrus	IV	incantation	Kellis
47	<i>PGM</i> XVIIa (<i>ARG</i> 16 [1914] 547-54)	64514	papyrus	IV	love spell	
48	<i>PGM</i> XVIIIa (<i>APF</i> 1 [1901] 427)	64364	papyrus	IV	healing charm (headache)	

²²² *GEMF* 84 reunites a group of six texts.

49	<i>PGM XVIIIb</i> (<i>BGU III</i> 956)	65802	papyrus	IV- V	healing charm (fever)	
50	<i>PGM XIXa</i> (<i>Aegyptus</i> 4 [1923] 305-8)	89305	papyrus	IV- V	love spell	
51	<i>PGM XXVII</i> (<i>P.Oxy.</i> XII 1478)	64261	papyrus	III- IV	victory charm	Oxyrhynchus
52	<i>PGM XXVIIIa</i> (<i>P.Oxy.</i> XVI 2061)	64678	papyrus	V	protective charm (scorpion)	Oxyrhynchus
53	<i>PGM XXVIIIb</i> (<i>P.Oxy.</i> XVI 2062)	64962	papyrus	VI	protective charm (scorpion)	Oxyrhynchus
54	<i>PGM XXXV</i> (<i>PSI I</i> 29)	64721	papyrus	V	victory charm	Oxyrhynchus
55	<i>PGM XXXIX</i> (<i>P.Oslo I</i> 4)	64481	papyrus	IV	love spell	Oxyrhynchus
56	<i>PGM XLI</i>	64913	papyrus	V- VI	incantation	
57	<i>PGM XLII</i>	65111	papyrus	VI	incantation	
58	<i>PGM XLIII</i>	64609	papyrus	V	healing charm (fever)	
59	<i>PGM XLVII</i>	64629	parchment	? ²²³	healing charm (fever)	
60	<i>PGM XLIX</i>	89310	papyrus	? ²²⁴	incantation	

²²³ This amulet is dated to the fifth century by C. Wessely, *Neue griechische Zauberpapyri* (Vienna, 1893) 68-9. While according to Trismegistos it is dated to the third-fifth century. Although the date may not be certain, the item has been included in this checklist as it falls under the period of Late Antiquity.

²²⁴ The following amulet is dated to the third-eighth century according to Trismegistos and the collection website. Despite the uncertain specific date, it still is dated to Late Antiquity and thus has been included in this checklist.

61	<i>PGM LXIV</i> (<i>MPER NS I 28b</i>)	64518	papyrus	III- IV	love spell	
62	<i>PGM LXV</i> (<i>MPER. NS I 28c</i>)	65252	papyrus	VI- VII	formulary	
63	<i>PGM LXVI</i>	64282	papyrus	III- IV	curse	Oxyrhynchus
64	<i>PGM T1</i>	64608	wood	IV- V	incantation	
65	<i>PGM T2c</i> (<i>SB I 971 = ZAC 11 [2008] 480, no. 1</i>)	89303	bone	II- VI	<i>Βουϝ-</i> formula	
66	<i>P.Kell. I 86</i>	64440	papyrus	IV	healing charm (fever)	Kellis
67	<i>P.Kell. I 87</i> (<i>ZPE 152 [2005] 156</i>)	64441	papyrus	IV	healing charm (fever)	Kellis
68	<i>P. Köln VIII 338</i>	109622	silver tablet	III- IV	healing charm (solomonic exorcism)	
69	<i>P. Köln VIII 339</i>	109623	silver tablet	III- IV	healing charm (for aching feet)	
70	<i>P. Köln X 425</i> ²²⁵	69038	papyrus	V- VI	healing charm (fever)	
71	<i>P.Oxy. LXXIX 5205</i> ²²⁶	372070	papyrus	IV- V	curse	Oxyrhynchus

²²⁵ This amulet against fever is written in both Coptic and Greek.

²²⁶ The editors of this text note that the verb *πάταξον* at line 5 comes from a Christian context and serves as a technical term for divine intervention, see *P.Oxy. LXXIX*, pp. 149-54. However, this does not necessarily constitute a Christian element in itself.

72	<i>P.Oxy.</i> LXVIII 4673	101345	papyrus	IV- V	love spell	Oxyrhynchus
73	<i>P.Oxy.</i> LXVIII 4674	101346	papyrus	IV- V	love spell	Oxyrhynchus
74	<i>P.Oxy.</i> LXXXII 5308	702433	papyrus	III- IV	healing charm	Oxyrhynchus
75	<i>SB X</i> 10230 (<i>Aegyptus</i> 46 [1966] 178-9)	32649	papyrus	IV	charm for the growth of children	Oxyrhynchus
76	<i>SB XX</i> 14664 (<i>SAK</i> 19 [1992] 85-7)	34053	papyrus	IV	love spell	
77	<i>SB XX</i> 14986 (<i>ZPE</i> 75 [1988] 258-9)	34182	<i>lamella</i>	IV	protective charm	
78	<i>SB XXII</i> 15233 ²²⁷	64384	papyrus	IV	formulary	
79	<i>SB XXVI</i> 16650 (<i>GRBS</i> 40 [1999] 163-5)	97160	lead tablet	IV	love spell	
80	<i>SEG XXXI</i> 1569 (<i>ZPE</i> 42 [1981] 112)	64833	wood	V- VI	incantation	
81	<i>SEG XXXIV</i> 1625 (<i>ZPE</i> 55 [1984] 114 = <i>ZAC</i> 11 [2008] 481 [no. 5])	105021	wood	VI- VII	<i>Βους</i> - formula	
82	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 8 (<i>P.Haun.</i> III 50)	64309	papyrus	III- IV	incantation	

²²⁷ The *verso* contains a Christian element, a cross, but its relation to the formulary is unknown.

83	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 9 (<i>P.Michael.</i> 27)	69041	papyrus	III-IV	healing charm (fever)	
84	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 10 (<i>SB XIV</i> 114943)	64270	papyrus	III-IV	healing charm (fever)	Arsinoite nome
85	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 11 (<i>P.Princ.</i> III 159)	64347	papyrus	III-IV	healing charm (fever)	
86	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 12 (<i>Studia Antiqua</i> 22 [1975] 30-43)	32951	papyrus	III-IV	healing charm (fever)	
87	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 13 (<i>P.Lund</i> IV 12)	69043	papyrus	IV	healing charm (exorcism)	
88	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 14 (<i>P.Erl.</i> 15)	64406	papyrus	IV	healing charm (fever)	
89	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 15 (<i>SB XIV</i> 12114)	32950	papyrus	IV-V	protective charm	
90	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 16 (<i>P.Wash.Univ.</i> II. 75)	64607	papyrus	IV-V	protective charm (scorpion)	
91	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 17 (<i>P.Amst.</i> I.15)	64861	papyrus	V	protective charm (scorpion)	
92	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 18 (<i>P.Leid.Inst.</i> I 9)	69039	papyrus	V	healing charm (fever)	
93	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 19 (<i>P.IFAO</i> III 50)	65812	papyrus	VI	healing charm (fever)	
94	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 42 (<i>PSI</i> I 28)	92863	lead tablet	III-IV	love spell	Hermopolite nome

95	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 43 (<i>SB XIV</i> 11534)	30843	papyrus	IV	love spell	
96	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 44 (<i>SB XIV</i> 11535)	30844	papyrus	III- IV	love spell	
97	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> I 45 (<i>BJ</i> 168 [1968] 85-102)	92236	papyrus	V	love spell	Lykopolite nome
98	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 56 (<i>P.Oxy.</i> LXXXVI 5546)	92238	papyrus	III- IV	love spell	Oxyrhynchus
99	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 57 (<i>P.Rein.</i> II 88)	92335	lead tablet	IV	curse	
100	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 66 (<i>ZPE</i> 4 (1969) 187-91= <i>SEG</i> XLI 1619)	92331	lead tablet	III- IV	incantation to invoke a <i>daimon</i>	Arsinoite nome
101	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 87 (<i>ZPE</i> 17 [1969] 25)	64275	papyrus	III- IV	formulary	
102	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 92 (<i>P.Med.</i> I 20) ²²⁸	64588	papyrus	IV- V	formulary	
103	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 93 (<i>SB XVIII</i> 13874)	33002	papyrus	IV- V	formulary	
104	<i>Suppl.Mag.</i> II 100 (<i>P.Ant.</i> II 65)	64759	parchment	V	formulary	Antinoopolite nome
105	ZAC 11 (2008) 481 (no. 2)	131706	bone	II- VIII	Bouç- formula	
106	ZAC 11 (2008) 481 (no. 4)	131709	wood	II- VIII	Bouç- formula	

²²⁸ The editors remark that either the sheet was cut from a handbook or someone copied it from one. The text has some Coptic letters.

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