This book provides a thorough and interdisciplinary overview of the theory and practice of magic in the West in twenty chapters by experts in their fields. Its chronological scope extends from the Ancient Near East to twenty-first-century North America; its objects of analysis range from Persian curse tablets to U.S. Neopaganism. For comparative purposes, the volume includes chapters on developments in the Jewish and Muslim worlds, which are evaluated not simply for what they contributed at various points to European notions of magic but also as models of alternative development in the Mediterranean world. Similarly, the volume highlights the transformative and challenging encounters of Europeans with non-Europeans regarding the practice of magic in both early modern colonization and more recent decolonization.

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