

Magic: Frontiers and Boundaries
The First Societas Magica Conference
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Magic tends to be a term by which accusations are made or intellectual territories defended; like the terms 'heresy' or 'perversion,' it does not have a stable or secure content. Any accusation that an act, ritual, or mode of practice is magical will have a formula that peculiar to the time, place, institution, race, class, or gender of the accuser. Conversely, arguments that magic is a good thing, in a spiritual or material sense, also vary according to context, particularly because pro- and anti-magical arguments develop in relation to each other, and cause changes in one another's rhetorical and conceptual strategies. Assertions that magic exists or does not exist, has ceased to exist, is marginal, is flowering, has just declined or just erupted, is religious or non-religious, scientific or non-scientific, or develops into religion or science are part of an ongoing argument.

This conference will explore the locations, in texts, bodies of texts, or historical contexts, where magic becomes a problem, a *disputandum*, or a frontier of knowing from the ancient to the modern period, including modern ritual magic and contemporary magical religions. To put it another way, it will examine specific examples of the relation of magic to convention, to authority, to 'religion' and 'science' from a sociological or historical perspective.