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Dislodging "Embedded" Religion: A Brief Note on a Scholarly Trope

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[« Previous Article](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Article »](#)

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Scholars of ancient cultures are increasingly speaking of the "embeddedness" of ancient religion — arguing that the group under the heading of "religion" did not compose a well-defined category in antiquity; instead, they claim that other aspects of ancient culture. These writers use this notion of "embeddedness" to help us see that categories perceived as distinct (such as politics, economics, and religion) largely overlapped in antiquity. The trope of "embeddedness" produce the false impression that religion is a descriptive concept rather than a redescriptive concept for ancient cultures. Something "out there" in antiquity called "Roman religion" or "Mesopotamian religion," which scholars are simply d

allowing this slippage between descriptive and redescriptive uses of "religion," the rhetoric of "embedded religion" meant to solve.

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