

Roman divination in the second century BC. Roman divinatory practices are discussed in the context of historiographical, juridical and institutional sources, showing how divination was made into the decision-making tool that was demanded by the times.

Interesting as these (and many of the other) papers may be, the volume lacks an overarching view on how divination – and the divinatory sign especially – worked in the cultural areas under discussion. I would therefore not recommend *La Raison des signes* to a beginner in the field of divination studies. However, it has much to offer the more advanced reader in the shape of its very good contributions, certainly making the investment worthwhile.

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HERMARY (A.) and JAEGER (B.) *Eds*  
**Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum (ThesCRA) VI–VIII.** Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011–2012. Volume VI: 2011, Pp. 423, illus. £175. 9781606060735; VII: 2011, Pp. 272, illus. £175. 9781606060742; VIII: 2012, Pp. 468, illus. £175. 9781606-061022.

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Since its inception, the general purpose of this multi-authored and multilingual *Thesaurus* has been the systematic gathering of evidence regarding the rituals and cults of classical antiquity, including Greek, Roman and Etruscan cultures. It is a continuation of the *LIMC*, to which many cross-references are made. The organization of the *Thesaurus* renders it suitable both for the specialist and the wider public, since it presents the current state of research as well as suggestions for further reading. The first five volumes are dedicated to the presentation of primary sources, comprising literary and epigraphic texts, iconography and archaeological sources, including both monuments and small finds. These sources are arranged according to a thematic division: authors examine successively dynamic elements and cultic activities (processions, sacrifices, dedications, purification, divination, prayer, banquets, consecration, initiation, rites related to cult images, but also magic), static elements (cult places, cult personnel and instruments) and the occasions and circumstances of cult activities and rituals. Each

theme is introduced by a more or less lengthy and comprehensive essay followed by bibliographical references and a rather extensive catalogue of sources. The documentation is accompanied by interpretative analyses of the rituals, places, instruments and personnel involved.

The volumes under review here (VI–VIII) focus on rituals that mark or relate to the various stages and circumstances of life. The sources of the previous volumes are cited in footnotes. Since it is impossible to review in detail the immense collection of papers of these three volumes, I will summarize their contents and offer some general remarks.

Volume VI is dedicated to the ‘Stages and circumstances of life. Work, hunting, travel’. The sections follow closely the stages of life from birth through marriage to burial, including sickness and medicine, good and bad fortune. ‘Work’ consists of agricultural activities, artisanry and trade; ‘hunting’ includes fishing; ‘travel’ includes movement across land and sea.

The chapter on agriculture considers mostly the cults of Demeter and Dionysus. Therefore it is predictably arranged according to the aspects of the gods. We may wonder whether the question of the relation between the agricultural calendar and festivals does not come a little late in the conclusion, when it could have been the starting point of the discussion. Some of the other chapters relate to religion rather loosely to the extent that all aspects of the ancient world involved the gods and rituals.

Volume VII is dedicated to festivals and contests. In contrast to the other volumes, this one does not function as an encyclopedia. A thorough discussion of what a festival is and its main features (aetiology, specific rituals, significance for a given community) is rounded out by case studies. The focus here is on change and the dynamics of rituals instead of the usual common features arising from the presentation of all festivals. Particular themes for the Greek section are the physical settings of festivals (panhellenic or local, with limited access, such as sanctuaries of Demeter, or reserved for women, oracular sanctuaries), images of festivals in art and literary representations of festivals organized by genre. Overlaps are less common here than in the other volumes of the series. For example, ancient and Christian discourses are discussed in the section on Roman festivals instead of duplicating the discussion for the Greek ones. While in the Greek section the discussions focus on sources and methodology, in

the Roman one the festivals are presented according to the calendar, with a typology comprising agrarian festivals, civic festivals, festivals of the dead and imperial festivals.

Volume VIII is dedicated to private and public spaces, and polarities in religious life. After an introduction that takes into account earlier scholarship on the topic and related vocabulary, emphasizing interrelated facts instead of oppositions, we find discussions on domestic cults, public cults (with the traditional opposition between regional and interregional cults), associations and colleges, institutions, monetary economy, law (including curses and *asebeia*), politics and diplomacy, and war. Polarities are presented in terms of male/female, with a most useful discussion on gender, and inclusion/exclusion, presenting the various civic statuses and the related religious practices. The volume ends with essays on religious interrelations between the classical world and neighboring civilizations (the Semitic Near East, Egypt, Scythia, Thrace, Gaul and Germania, and the Iberian world). Even though the theme is far from being thoroughly explored, the essays show the extent to which the ancient classical world interacted with its surroundings.

The ambition of the *Thesaurus* is to address various audiences and therefore the treatment of the sections is double-edged. On the one hand, the volumes are accessible to a wider public and this means that the sections are not exhaustive; both the evidence and the discussion of the issues are representative, yet partial. The number of the authors reflects the variety of methodological approaches of various schools of thought. But this does mean that any specialist will be able to find gaps in the evidence and well-known ideas not further discussed. What is beyond doubt is the innovative treatment of the sources. It is more than a catalogue; we have here an inclusive approach with every type of evidence. Far from the usual collection of ill-assorted sources serving as mere illustration of the main topic, all the primary sources are here given their specific significance. This is, in fact, a most original way to approach the subject of religion.

A problem with the organization of the volumes is evident in most of them. Religion in the ancient world pervaded many kinds of activities and domains. Gods interacted with humans in every possible area, and many ritual activities are thus discussed in more than one section. To give an example, the Thesmophoria are discussed both in volume VI, as related to agriculture, and in volume

VII, as an exemplary case illustrating festivals. Prayers, sacrifices, dedications and first-fruits are treated in the section related to agriculture, but also in the ones on artisans and traders, and also in the supplement to I–V on animals and plants. Other issues obviously relate to the timely submission of entries by authors. Thus an addendum on Greek music in volume VI is far removed from the dances and banquets of volume II.

As for the content, the thematic division, while useful, is sometimes misleading. For example, while the authors mostly reject a sharp division between private and public spheres, the latter appears in the title of a section. There is also inconsistency according to the choices of authors, reflected, for instance, in a thematic selectiveness that inevitably leaves out several questions.

The thematic index announced along with volumes VI–VIII will complement the index of material evidence (museums, collections and sites) of the first five volumes. With thematic links possible, this *Thesaurus* will be even more useful. Overall, even though sections and chapters are of unequal quality and exhaustiveness, as is inevitable in a work of this kind, this is a valuable tool for all audiences, with up-to-date accounts and references and immediate comparisons between the various regions of the ancient world. The choice of thematic discussions on topics selected by the authors makes numerous essays successful in that they present case studies, on the one hand, and open up new directions, on the other, instead of providing the traditional alphabetical list that would eliminate most of the present critical discussions and the ability to contrast the multifaceted aspects of ancient religions.

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FARAONE (C.A.) **Vanishing Acts on Ancient Greek Amulets: From Oral Performance to Visual Design** (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 115). London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2012. Pp. xii + 105, illus. £38. 9781905670406.

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In this slim paperback, Faraone examines the so-called ‘wing-’ and ‘heart-shaped’ texts found both on amulets and in non-amuletic magical material. These texts were created by the repeated writing