Massa makes an important contribution here to the discussion of this complex topic but a clearer chronological focus would have allowed for a more thorough and specified analysis.

Huet looks at the question of iconography and if this can tell us anything about whether deities were perceived and worshipped as Greek and with *Graeco ritu* or as Roman, depending on the prominence of these elements in a statue's iconography. For this study, Huet chose to look at sacrifices of bulls to Mars, as depicted in Roman reliefs. These images confirm that the Roman iconography of Mars uses a variety of traditions ranging from archaising and classicising 'Greek' depictions to images of Mars as a Roman imperator and eclectic mixtures of all elements depending on context and *utilitas*. To what extent the use of Greek and/or Roman elements signifies that the sacrifice was held according to *Graeco ritu* remains unclear. These observations are perhaps not surprising, they do, however, show how diverse but also all-encompassing the practices of what we sometimes carelessly call *interpretatio* are.

The volume makes an important contribution to the current scholarly debate of ancient polytheism, continuing old debates in very fruitful ways (e.g. Bettini, Belayche) and equally opening new debates (e.g. C. Pisano, J. Scheid). Overall, the contributors stay true to the original theme of the volume as phrased by the editors, namely a dialogue across history and historiography with a focus on the category of *interpretatio*. Reading through the individual sections I noticed that this category, often defined linguistically by modern scholars (C. Ando, '*Interpretatio Romana*', *CPh* 100 [2005], 41–51, at 41), is as manifold as Greek and Roman 'interpretations' of the divine themselves. *Interpretatio* in the widest sense, it seems, permeated all media and genres, as for example literature, epigraphy, iconography and even ritual practice, depending mostly on individual contexts. It left me wondering whether one can (and should) even attempt to categorise and make sense of an *interpretatio* of allegedly 'foreign' gods, considering for example, the Greeks' struggle to make sense of their own polytheistic world (H. Versnel, *Coping with Gods* [2011], Chapters 1 and 3), which, after all, was itself a product of cross-cultural interactions. The dialogue between Greeks and Romans concerning their respective pantheons as discussed in great variety in this volume seems to have been as much an attempt to understand and position 'other' gods as it was a discourse of their own pantheons.

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COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE GODS

BONNET (C.), BELAYCHE (N.), ALBERT-LLORCA (M.), AVDEEFF (A.), MASSA (F.), SLOBODZIANEK (I.) (edd.) *Puissances divines à l'épreuve du comparatisme. Constructions, variations et réseaux relationnels*. (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses 175.) Pp. 490, ills, colour pls. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017. Paper, €70. ISBN: 978-2-503-56944-4.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X18001749

'Les dieux helléniques sont des Puissances, non des personnes. La pensée religieuse répond aux problèmes d'organisation et de classification des Puissances.' This 1965 statement by J.-P. Vernant was the starting point for two conferences held in Toulouse in 2014.

Participants discussed the definition of 'divine power', examined verbal, material and ritual modalities for its expression and investigated the cultural construction of divine power through the lens of Vernant's proposal that the Hellenic powers existed only in relation to one another, in a network of hierarchies, oppositions and complementarities.

The strength of this volume lies in its comparative approach, whereby the concepts of pantheon and divine power can be examined across diverse cultures and periods. The papers are organised in five thematic sections dealing with the cultural construction of power, the nature of pantheons, personal and relational aspects of power, limits on power (or the lack thereof), and the modalities through which power is manifested. The modern cultures selected for study include tribal peoples of Nepal, the American Southwest (Hopi), West Africa and three regions of India. These are juxtaposed with ancient Mesopotamian, Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Jewish and Christian examples. The value of a comparative perspective goes well beyond a simple testing of Vernant's formulation against cultures other than the Greek. Cognitive approaches to religion, which are beginning to gain a foothold among Classicists, assert the existence of widely-shared, cross-cultural habits of thought and thus call for renewed attention to comparative study. Only a few papers address the comparative project directly, but the editors' introductions to each section point to shared perspectives. While limited space prevents discussion of all 22 papers, I will focus on those that seem to me to best represent the key themes of this rich collection.

The genesis of Vernant's ideas about *puissance* and pantheon is explored in a valuable introduction by V. Pirenne-Delforge and J. Scheid, where we learn of the impact of Georges Dumézil, Erwin Rohde and Louis Gernet. Several contributors directly address the question of whether Vernant's description of the Greek 'relational' pantheon is applicable to their own cultural data. The model turns out to be weakest when applied to cultures that lack detailed mythological narratives and focus primarily on local interactions. For example, G. Schlemmer notes that while the Kulung of Nepal possess a limited mythology, their powers do not form a collective or society in which each power is individualised, nor do they exhibit systematic relations. He proposes to describe the Kulung powers in terms of their 'champs d'actualisation', which are circumstantial and fleeting; in some cases the spirits are represented as disembodied emotions or intentions. O. Journet-Diallo draws similar conclusions about the Jóola of West Africa, who interact principally with local superhuman powers known as *ukíin*. There are few myths about the *ukíin*, and they do not form a pantheon, in the sense of an organised group of gods whose functions are defined in relation to one another. Instead their distinctness is observable only in terms of ritual, in their sacrificial locations, the individuals and groups who tend them, and the circumstances of each cult's establishment.

A number of papers fruitfully address the question of interaction between local and supralocal systems, revealing how powers that are immanent in the landscape take precedence in daily life, even when they hold lowly positions in a divine hierarchy. The contributions dealing with India (A. Avdeef, C. Guillaume-Pey, M. Carrin) address the gap between the religious life of the cities, where the shrines of major Hindu gods such as Shiva and Vishnu are located, and that of the villages, where regional goddesses (such as Murukaṉ in Tamil Nadu) or local powers hold sway. J.-J. Glassner's paper, on the other hand, describes what happens when pantheons collide and how Mesopotamian religions sustained breaches of their systems as the tutelary deities of successively dominant cities (Nippur, Babylon, Assur) encountered one another. Nippur, the city of the Sumerian creator god Enlil, resisted the cult of Babylonian Marduk long after Babylon's political ascendance. Originally not a creator god, Assur absorbed the cosmological and mythological dimensions of his two predecessors as his city grew more powerful. Glassner's

paper is especially valuable for its diachronic perspective on the role of warfare and political hegemony in shaping pantheons.

Just as a comparative perspective destabilises our assumption that polytheistic cultures possess pantheons, it renews questions about the power/person distinction. In his 1974 *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*, Vernant explained that the Greek divinities are not 'persons with a unified being, possessing individuality and some form of interior spiritual life'. Many of the papers in this volume accordingly demonstrate how divine powers manifest themselves not as unified, singular personalities, but through multiple modalities which seem quite at odds with 'personhood'. G. Pironti starts from the proposition that each Greek god is not only part of a group, but is himself or herself plural, impossible to pin down to one identity. Then, too, abstract concepts can be divinised on an *ad hoc* basis, as in a Mytilenean sacrifice to (among others) *Epiteleia tōn Agathōn*, 'Accomplishment of Good Things'. R. Parker examines the shifting relationship between name and identity in the case of Zeus, whose name could function as an adjective connoting greatness when coupled with the names of other deities. 'Zeus Dionysos', for example, manifested the cultic identity and iconography of Dionysos, while Zeus Dolichenus was an amplified form of the local god of Doliche. Zeus Sabazios and Zeus Sarapis, on the other hand, were represented with attributes of Zeus, so that in these cases the greater god seems to have absorbed features of the lesser. M. Bettini approaches the question of divine plurality from the perspective of Latin linguistics, noting the existence of *Silvani*, *Fauni* and *Carmentes* as well as such literary conundrums as Catullus' *Veneres* and Horace's *Vertumni*. *Dis Manibus* can belong to one person, while the gender and number of *Pales* remain in question. The neuter singular *numen* denotes intentional agency, but without number or individuality; it refers to divine power as part of a collective and can be used similarly in both singular and plural.

As Bettini notes, the power/person debate turns on one's definition of personhood. From a cognitive perspective, a key component of 'personhood' is the actual or potential exercise of intentional agency, which is a feature of the vast majority of superhuman powers across cultures; otherwise, there would be no point in attempting to interact with them. As the Roman concept of *numen* demonstrates, however, cultures may develop distinctive representations of superhuman agency which are anthropomorphic only in that they possess minimal aspects of mentality, such as intentions or emotions. The role of the dead as superhuman powers is particularly interesting, for the personhood of the dead may either be gradually attenuated (Guillaume-Pey on the Sora) or deliberately sustained through narrative and ritual techniques (Carrin on the Tulu). P. Perez writes that a limited number of the 300–400 Hopi *katsinam* have personal names; some are animals and plants (blue maize, eagle), others are natural phenomena (ray of sun), and still others are gods, heroes and ancestors. The Hopi resist speaking in abstract, theological terms of the *katsinam*, but instead represent them in more concrete ways, through the masked dance and the famous 'dolls'. Yet the *katsina* mask is a person in the eyes of the Hopi, a fact that challenges standard Western notions of personhood.

In other cases, the locus of interest may be transferred from a power that has intentional agency (and is thus, in a minimal sense, a person) to a cult object imbued with power, which is more accessible and manipulable. R. Naiweld uses Vernant's person/power distinction to contrast the late-antique Christian focus on the personhood of Jesus with the Jewish focus on the Torah as a cult object, while S. D'Intino explores the power attributed to the word in Vedic hymns, and T. Galoppin shows how Egyptian adepts generated the same type of power wielded by the gods through the manipulation of sacred animals. Among the Sora of India (Guillaume-Pey), local powers called the *nyonan* are likened to electric currents that can collect in certain 'charged' locations; electrical devices such

as phones and DVD players are therefore employed in rituals. A very different mode of interaction comes through 'spirit pots', treated as persons, which are used in domestic cult. Thus, the local powers of the Sora sometimes manifest distinct personalities, particularly in situations of direct interaction, but in other contexts they are represented as depersonalised forces.

Such contradictions are familiar to students of religion, yet as H. Versnel points out in his paper on omnipotence, the temptation to explain them away should be avoided. Vernant's relational model led him to the conclusion that polytheism was incompatible with omnipotence, since each Greek god was defined and limited by the power of others. But already in the *Odyssey* (4.237) Zeus 'can do all things'. Thus omnipotence is part of traditional Greek religion, yet it is often attributed in a vague manner to *ho theos* or *hoi theoi*. Attributions of unlimited power, typically found in prayers and hymns, reflect the orant's hope that the god can solve any problem. These texts represent 'henotheistic moments in a polytheistic world'. Another form of contradiction is found in Tamil Nadu (Avdeef), where the *kirakam* are represented in several modalities: as gods in devotional literature, as planets in astrological texts and as demons who cause illness through possession in the medical and tantric literature. Although astrological interpretation is constructed on the predictability of planetary movements, it also includes the attribution of agency to the planets, who are referred to in terms of respect ('Lord Mars'). Magical procedures may be used whereby persons acting under malign planetary influence (for example, a straying wife) are coerced by the local Goddess. Astrological destiny thus exists in stark logical contradiction with the ritual practitioner's ability to reverse planetary influences.

Many edited collections resulting from conferences suffer from a lack of thematic unity. In the present case, the proposal to investigate Vernant's thesis about the Greek *puissances divines* from a comparative perspective has had the happy result of honouring his memory through a collection of unusual coherence, in which the contributions belong together because they shed light on each other. This hefty volume of (mostly) Francophone papers holds abundant rewards for students of world religions in general and Graeco-Roman religion in particular.

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THE PHENOMENON OF INCUBATION IN ANTIQUITY

RENBERG (G.H.) *Where Dreams May Come. Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World*. In two volumes. (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 184.) Pp. lxx + xiv + 1046, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017. Cased, €243, US$292. ISBN: 978-90-04-34621-5 (vol. 1), 978-90-04-34622-2 (vol. 2), 978-90-04-29976-4 (set).

doi:10.1017/S0009840X18002202

The peculiar Graeco-Roman phenomenon of incubation is the subject of R.'s new two-volume book. By its simplest definition, incubation is the ritualised sleep in a sacred