

Leipzig dissertation of Dieter Dietrich (*Der hellenistische Isiskult als kosmopolitische Religion und die sogenannte Isismission*, 1966).

A few densely written pages draw some conclusions, sorely needed after many detailed discussions. The chief insight: the Greeks used writing mainly in order to feign antiquity and to invent tradition in order to legitimate invention; their religious practice was so conservative that it relied on oral tradition throughout, with the exception of the few marginal areas where innovation and reform and, in its wake or even as its instrument, writing can be seen at work.

The book left me with a somewhat ambivalent feeling. It asks an important question, and in the end, it has answered it in a satisfactory, although rather sketchy, way. In between, B. traverses much territory, from Delphic oracles to Hermetic writing; he does so in a sometimes meandering way, getting involved with secondary issues or with questions to which the answer finally given is not new. B. is original especially when he takes up long neglected topics—official collections of oracles, the P. Gurōb, or Euhemerism. Even to a native German-speaker, it did not make easy reading—which is a pity: I wonder how many non-German graduate students will labour through the book. If they did, they would learn something; but the failure to do so would not be their fault alone.

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GREEK RITUAL

F. GRAF (ed.): *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*. Pp. viii + 467, 39 pls. Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1998. Cased. ISBN: 3-519-07433-8.

This collection of essays is a Festschrift for a scholar of towering intellectual stature and immense influence edited by a scholar of great distinction. The expectations of outstanding quality raised by this combination are mostly fulfilled. The volume contains several excellent essays. The section on ritual and tragedy, which contains three important essays, by Lloyd-Jones, Krummen, and Calame, is uniformly excellent—irrespective of whether one agrees with all their various positions. There are some outstanding essays also in the other sections; I will say something about two, which are of more general import. Bremmer's investigation of the terms 'Religion', 'Ritual', and the opposition 'Sacred vs. Profane' shows the culturally determined nature of their use and the limited appropriateness of the opposition 'Sacred vs. Profane' to Greek and Roman religions; these terms, B. concludes, are scholarly constructs, and the awareness of their ideological origin may help us to ask new questions. Henrichs explores the complex issue of the Greeks' ritual self-understanding. He points out that only very rarely do Greek writers comment on ritual behaviour to try to make it intelligible. He discusses some texts that make up three types of discourse on ritual: aetiological explanations, symbolic interpretations (seeking to uncover the meaning of ritual actions), and criticism of ritual—far less widespread than criticism of myths and of the gods. Other texts, e.g. Arist. *Nub.* 298–313 and Thuc. 2.38.1, give different insights into the Greeks' ritual self-understanding—in this case into Athenian perceptions pertaining to festivals. This brilliant essay contains many important insights and also offers a sophisticated critique of the notion that the Greeks felt guilt or even unease over the killing of the sacrificial animal; using skilfully the evidence of images, H. concludes that the

Athenians did not attribute any special significance to the act of killing. Hägg's extremely valuable review of the evidence on Mycenaean ritual is informed by great learning, sound scholarship, and sophisticated methodological understanding.

There are other important essays in the volume, but, given the limited space available, it is more useful (given the volume's deserved prestige) to make a few comments on one that raises methodological problems, N. Marinatos's essay on the relationship between Artemis and the 'Aegean Goddess of Nature', which reaches the 'inevitable conclusion' 'that the Greeks, far from inheriting a prehistoric Aegean goddess whom they turned into Artemis, indeed shaped their virgin goddess under Near Eastern influence'. The evidence for the Aegean goddess is iconographical, but there is no discussion of the problems involved in reading Minoan and Mycenaean images. The evidence is selected and interpreted to fit the conclusion that the goddess's relationship to animals is always tender or affectionate, and that she is not a huntress. For example, M. rejects a seal depicting a goddess with a bow as a fake. Determining the authenticity of Aegean rings and seals is an extremely complex question (cf. I. Pini, *CMS* I.135–57), but M. simply dismisses this seal in two and a half lines of subjective comments, despite the fact that the foremost expert on the subject, I. Pini, classifies it as genuine in *CMS* XI.26. Also, there is no mention of the woman with a bow in the cultic scene on the ring *CMS* XI.29, which, to put it mildly, cannot be assumed to have no relevance to the question of the goddess's association with hunting. As for M.'s readings of the images, can we really know that the contemporary viewers saw the lions/griffins flanking the goddess as 'submissive of their own volition and . . . not subdued by force'? The schema does not represent force being used, but can we know that none was seen by contemporaries who made sense of these images through assumptions to which we have no access—especially since in some representations force is indeed shown?

There are comparable problems in the discussion of Artemis, who M. thinks was very harsh. Evidence for a 'softer Artemis' is relegated to 'local cult', is 'not part of the Panhellenic and more abstract iconographical conception of her persona'; but the relationship between 'Panhellenic' and 'local' is not defined. M. sees this softer aspect in Artemis Brauronia, but it is unclear whether she thinks it is limited to this sanctuary. In fact, the Athenian persona of Artemis included her Brauronia persona, since the cult was part of Athenian *polis* religion from the beginning; and Artemis Mounychia is closely comparable to Artemis Brauronia. If it is Artemis' Athenian persona that M. thinks included this softer aspect, how does she separate this local persona from that on Athenian images? Had Athenian (and other) vase painters blocked out their religious assumptions about Artemis when painting images? And how do the many images in which Artemis is accompanied by a hind or fawn fit the notion of her being 'visually associated with animals that denote aggression'? Then, Artemis' persona as protector of women in childbirth is attested in many cities, and Eur. *Hipp.* 166–9 may suggest that it was perceived to be Panhellenic. Can such a goddess fit the schema of Artemis the 'anti-mother'? M. uses literary evidence (very selectively), and this presents further problems; we know, for example, that Artemis is a virgin (a trait M. makes much of) because the texts tell us; since we do not have equivalent Minoan and Mycenaean texts, M. is not comparing like with like. As for her harshness, in fact, where Artemis (who, like all deities, was constructed through very complex processes, involving complex interactions) is visible to us, she has, like all Greek deities, a benevolent and a cruel side, one or the other of which may be stressed in different contexts.

Nevertheless, the volume as a whole makes an important contribution to the study of Greek religion, as befits its most illustrious honorand.

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TIES THAT BIND

E. VOUTIRAS: *Marital Life and Magic in Fourth Century Pella*. Pp. xvi + 151, 11 pls. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1998. Paper, Hfl. 70. ISBN: 90-5063-407-9.

The focus of this articulate and attractively presented monograph is a lead tablet found in grave 18 of the oldest cemetery in Pella, Macedonia. It is an interesting document for various reasons. As a text composed in a hitherto unparalleled North West Greek dialect (pp. 20–34), it may be one of the first pieces of direct evidence of the language spoken and written in Macedonia during the Classical period (V. judiciously eschews dogmatism; the dialect of the tablet may turn out to be an intrusive rather than indigenous form, bearing in mind the mixed background of Pella's inhabitants, pp. 32–4). Whatever its precise linguistic connections, the tablet is one of the oldest inscribed objects found in Macedonia. The grave contained no goods and the only dating evidence is derived from the context of the cut (pp. 1–7). The shaft belongs to a group of similar graves cut into the soft local yellow stone during the first half of the fourth century B.C. The area was subsequently redesigned as part of a new town plan around the *agora*. This contextual data accords well with the letter forms, which resemble those of the Derveni and Timotheos papyri (*Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, edd. André Laks, Glenn Most [Oxford, 1997], appeared too late to be included here). V. is tempted to push the date of the tablet upwards, closer to the second quarter of the fourth century rather than the third quarter (pp. 5–6). With so little comparative evidence, a categorical answer is impossible.

The content of the text is equally compelling (pp. 8–19). The agent (the *defigens*) is a woman; only the second syllable of her name is preserved, and V. inserts the likeliest first syllable to make this name Phila. She casts a binding spell upon the marriage of her former lover (?), Dionysophon, and his bride Thetima, in the hope that somehow their marriage will be forestalled or nullified. As V. explains, the nature of a binding spell is to inhibit an act, not cause harm to the named subjects (see John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* [Oxford, 1992]). At the same time, the agent appeals to the *daimones* of the nether regions to support her just cause and seeks to deflect other potential spouses, but more especially Thetima (ll. 4, 5, and 7). V. distinguishes the first three lines of the text from what follows. There seems to be an inconsistency in the two parts, the first containing no direct reference to the identity of the agent or the powers invoked, and taking the standard form of a binding spell; the second half, on the other hand, names agent and powers explicitly, and is an overt prayer for Thetima's annihilation. Completing the first part is the bestowal of the curse upon Makron (otherwise not referred to, but presumed to be the person in whose grave the tablet was discovered), and the statement that Dionysophon should only marry if the agent were to dig up and read this text again (pp. 35–67). V. proposes that the text was actually written by 'Phila' herself, and provides some formulaic examples, probably from the hands of travelling 'magicians', by way of contrast (pp. 58–67).

V. develops his thesis by examining the social context of the *defixio*, namely the status of the agent and her relationship with Dionysophon (pp. 68–89), then the kinds