

hard to understand, namely A.'s opinion that the ancient Greek religion 'seems to have drawn one of its last breaths in the dark room of Eleusis' (p. 196; cf. the book's last sentence, p. 203).

Inadequate exploitation of archaeological evidence and the outdated bibliography diminish the book's value, but those who can handle A.'s convoluted style will find new thoughts about Greek eschatology.

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ORAL RELIGION

R. BAUMGARTEN: *Heiliges Wort und heilige Schrift bei den Griechen. Hieroi Logoi und verwandte Erscheinungen.* (ScriptOralia 110. Reihe A: Altertumswissenschaftliche Reihe, 26). Pp. 250. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1998. Cased, DM 96. ISBN: 3-8233-5420-5.

Gods talk, and sometimes, gods write, or their prophets write what the gods have been telling them. In some religions—the 'Religions of the Book'—this results in Sacred Scripture. Greek religion is generally, and rightly, considered as having no sacred scriptures: but from Herodotus onwards, we hear about *ἱεροὶ λόγοι*, 'sacred accounts', and often enough, these accounts must have been written. Baumgarten's wide-ranging study wants to find out what those 'sacred accounts' were and why they did not result in Sacred Books. To do so, he looks at several groups of verbal utterances, both oral and written, that the Greeks connected with their religion, that ended up in a written text, and that often were called *ἱερός*—oracles, Orphic and Pythagorean texts, texts in mystery cult, 'Egyptianizing' texts; in order to keep his topic manageable and to avoid the tricky problem of Christian influence, he limits his interest to pre-imperial times.

He progresses from more oral to more written. He begins with oracles (pp. 15–69), both the institutionalized and the 'free-lance' ones, the collections ascribed to Bakis and the Sibyl. The chapter, like the entire book, is well researched, but somewhat uninspired, and it suffers from the (perhaps unavoidable) need to rely to a large extent on specialist accounts, and to abridge and sometimes to distort complex arguments (e.g. the process by which the Romans obtained a new copy of their burnt collection of the Oracula Sibyllina, pp. 56f.). The conclusion—institutional oracles helped in decision-making and had no 'real' interest in the future—is neither new nor the full truth: at least Delphi played a large rôle in sanctioning decisions. More surprisingly, there is no discussion of inscribed oracles, although they start as early as the later sixth century (recently J. Rodríguez Somolinos, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 17 [1991], 69–71: Didyma), and some texts played important ideological functions (e.g. Olbia Pontica, L. Dubois, *Inscriptions grecques dialectales d'Olbia du Pont* [Geneva 1996], p. 146 no. 93, with W. Burkert's discussion, in J. Solomon (ed.), *Apollo. Origins and Influences* [Tucson, 1994], pp. 49–60, or the epigram of Arbinas at Xanthos, J. Bousquet, in: *Fouilles de Xanthos* 9 [Paris, 1992], 56).

Next Orphic literature (pp. 70–121), both the literary texts ascribed to Orpheus (and Musaios and, in Athens, Eumolpos) and the epigraphic documents of more doubtful paternity (the bone tablets from Olbia, the so-called Orphic gold tablets). B. rightly stresses the rôle that the poems of Orpheus and Musaios played in the mystery cults of Eleusis and of Dionysos, and the function that the gold tablets had in Bacchic ritual:

the tablets ‘play the role of the mystagogue’ (p. 96). I could not agree more, although again the facts are somewhat more complex: the voices recorded in the gold leaves are not only those of a teacher and, in a certain sense, mystagogue during the Bacchic initiation rite (given the assumption that instruction about the way to the beyond was part of Bacchic initiation), they are also those of fellow initiates and sometimes of the initiate him- or herself. The reasons for inscribing (and therefore immortalizing) these different voices on the gold leaves are thus more complex than just the preservation of a guiding voice in the netherworld, although this certainly is a major reason. A lengthy chapter discusses the different Orphic theogonies; it is heavily in debt to Martin West’s analysis, although B. manages to disagree on some points. Whereas the early theogonies might have had a ritual context (see the Derveni papyrus), the later ones (Hieronymean, etc.) were texts clothing contemporary philosophical ideas in the garb of high religious antiquity. The most original part of this chapter assesses the rôle that the itinerant priests played in the development of the concept of sacred texts in the fifth and fourth centuries (pp. 117–121).

From this, an easy step leads to the use of texts in mystery cults (pp. 122–43). There is not much to say about institutionalized cults—Eleusis and Samothrace did not use books; the later, more circumscribed mysteries of Andania and Pheneos did, as Pausanias records. Whether the development from a purely oral tradition (Eleusis) to the written recording of a religious tradition (Andania) should be called progress (p. 131) is another matter; and anyway, we do not have enough data to prove whether those Andanian or Phenean sacred texts preserved an oral tradition or whether they were late reconstructions in order to legitimate the new start of the cults after a break. Books play a larger rôle in non-institutional mysteries, not the least in those of Dionysos and Isis. The evidence for Dionysos leads to Egypt and to the edict of Ptolemaios Philopator: as an example of such an Egyptian ritual text, B. discusses the long neglected Gurôb papyrus (pp. 139–142)—a valuable contribution (see now also J. Hordern, *ZPE* 129 [2000], 131–40).

The Pythagoreans have often been brought together with Orphism, since Ion of Chios, and *ἔροϊ λόγοι* are attributed to Pythagoras, whom B. regards, not surprisingly, as the founder of a ‘religious sect’ (the discussion on pp. 144f. adds nothing new). B. examines in detail the hexameters attributable to a ‘sacred’, i.e. esoteric, text, which he courageously dates after Timaios, as part of a wider fabrication of Hellenistic Pseudo-Pythagorea (pp. 144–70).

The final part of the book deals with what B. calls ‘Egyptianizing’ texts (pp. 171–221). After a lengthy analysis of the Greek perception of the Egyptian ‘Schriftkultur’ (Herodotus, Plato, Hekataios of Abdera), B. discusses Euhemerios and his followers, esp. Philon of Byblos. He points out how Euhemerios’ idea of turning an old inscription into the vehicle of a pseudoepigraphical account is new, and presumably depends on the political use of old inscriptions in Egypt (pp. 189ff.); he insists on a separation of two lines of ‘Euhemerism,—the view of gods as divinized human benefactors of old (Prodikos), and as powerful kings (Euhemerios) (p. 194). Close to Egypt are the aretalogies of Isis that have a clear cultic function (pp. 196–218); B. points out the family resemblance but marked individuality of the single texts, which argues for a common purpose in different local cult centers and against a stemmatic derivation from an Egyptian original or a use for missionaries, as earlier scholars had assumed. Despite the lack of reference to more recent work on mission (L. Troiani, ‘La missione nel mondo greco-romano’, *Due studi di storiografia e religione antica* [Como, 1988], pp. 41–58 and esp. M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion* [Oxford, 1994]), one is grateful for B.’s reliance on the otherwise ignored

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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FRITZ GRAF

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