

well as an author index. R. admits that the bibliography is not comprehensive and it is inevitable that there should be some omissions, particularly when the focus moves from Crete. Nevertheless, specialists and students will find that this is an extremely useful source of references. The preface anticipates some of the developments which have already occurred in the production of electronic versions of bibliographic databases, and this is surely the format which should be adopted for future editions in view of the rate at which publications on Minoan religion appear.

*University of Liverpool*

CHRISTOPHER MEE

W. SPEYER: *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien*. (Collectanea 15.) Pp. xix + 221. Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York: Georg Olms, 1995. DM 98. ISBN: 3-487-09993-4 (ISSN: 0175-8594).

'Die geistige Mitte, um die alle Religionen der Ursprungs- und der Hochkulturen kreisen, ist die heilige Macht', the first sentence of the first essay reprinted in this collection declares. To which one is tempted rudely to respond 'Who says?'. (The answer turns out to be 'E. Fascher, Art. Dynamis: *RAC* 4 [1959], 415–58'.) The ancients themselves do not say this, nor anything very like it. The claim must rather be that the ancients must have believed in such 'sacred power' in order to behave, in many areas of life, in the ways in which they did. But this sounds like an argument of the type stigmatized by Evans-Pritchard as 'if I were a horse': nothing could have induced me, reasonable creature that I am, to behave in such and such an odd way except such and such an odd belief (*Theories of Primitive Religion* [Oxford, 1965], Chapter 2).

The point is not an incidental one for S.; for a concept of 'sacred power' is central to most of the longest essays in the collection. There are studies here of powers that both wound and heal; of secret religious traditions; of 'the book as a vehicle of magico-religious power'; of the Eleusinian Mysteries; of sacred voices as a form of revelation in early Rome; of 'numinous' individuals; of heroes, divine men and saints. For S., all these phenomena are vehicles of a double-sided sacred power, or have access to it; and religion is simply the human endeavour to deal with this power.

S. has contributed extensively to the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, and most of the essays range over both Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian materials with enviable ease. But as for analysis, his interpretative concepts constantly recall those of the nineteenth-century pioneers whom Evans-Pritchard criticizes so effectively. Concepts such as that of sacred power could perhaps receive a systematic defence, but certainly stand in need of one. Too many alternative approaches to the problem of interpreting religious behaviour are here simply ignored.

*New College, Oxford*

R. C. T. PARKER

G. CLOKE: *This Female Man of God: Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, AD 350–450*. Pp. xi + 243. London: Routledge, 1995. ISBN: 0-415-09469-0.

This is a book that will please undergraduates. As an overview of a subject that has attracted a lot of attention in the past decade it provides a useful introduction to the subject of women and the ascetic movement in the fourth and fifth centuries. It both does, and does not, live up to its title: C. claims to be giving an overview (p. 7) and in this she succeeds, but as with broad sweeps, it often leaves the tantalized reader asking for more. A prime example of this is the promise of a discussion of the *imago dei* debate, which is set up in Chapter 3, but it is short, superficial on the theological ramifications, and equally not followed through in the conclusion. On the other hand, the book ranges over a huge amount of source material, from Seneca and Plutarch to the Church Fathers, with stops in between. It is in this sense that this is a great undergraduate book; it provides both information and ways of thinking about a subject. In the introduction and first chapter the problems of talking about women and using patristic evidence are engaged with, though I would take issue with the claim that '... the fathers' thought-processes were the product of a female environment ...' (p. 6). It seems that by her conclusion, by far the most interesting part of the book, C. had disagreed with herself and is arguing that despite womens'

undoubted ability to break the mould they do so within the parameters of their own social circumstance and the cultural reading of what it meant to be a woman in the later Roman empire.

The early chapters give a good survey of the position of women in the period and factors that affect their lives and gives a précis of current thinking on such matters as age at marriage and the legal position of women within the family. Chapter two is also good on the tension for the Church Fathers in advocating celibacy and the ambiguity surrounding this in some writings. This is picked up in the subsequent chapter which examines the problems adopting a life of celibacy can bring to a woman: tension between two opposing views—on the one hand, the needs, particularly of wealthy families, to maintain prestige through marriage and the transference of wealth, and on the other, the holiness and spiritual prestige that comes with the ascetic lifestyle, but which denied those essential familial and civic responsibilities. One of the great advantages of the book is that it offers a number of women as examples. Readers familiar with the subject will find Paula, the Melanias, Marcella, Demetrias et al. all well treated and examined. The chapters follow the pattern of Jerome's dictum of a hierarchy of holiness in Christian female rôles in that they are divided into one each on virgins (the hundredfold), widows (the sixtyfold), and mothers (the thirtyfold—only really good for creating more virgins). These three central chapters are of a similar format: they present good surveys of the pre-Christian situation, followed by what patristic writers thought of it. As such they are full of information and would serve as an excellent springboard for those who wanted to study particular areas in more depth. The final chapter, which presents much of the theoretical framework absent from the rest of the book, is good. Here C. rightly suggests that to see religion as 'liberating' for women of this period and that women saw themselves as particularly restricted, is anachronistic (p. 161), but the discussion of theoretical matters is limited. What is both good and bad about this book is that it is an overview. It suffers from poor copy-editing, a strange mix of referencing in the first chapter and the establishment of the Harvard system by the third—and the endnotes are mostly such that they could have been incorporated in the text, but that is not the fault of the author. All in all, a welcome addition to the growing bibliography on the history of late antiquity and women's history.

University of Birmingham

MARY HARLOW

G. C. PAPANASTASSIOU: *Compléments au Dictionnaire étymologique du grec ancien de Pierre Chantraine (A–Ω)*. Pp. 149. Thessaloniki: Éditions Magia, 1994. Paper. ISBN: 960-7244-09-5.

There are two tasks which confront the compiler of an etymological dictionary: to collect the theories which have been put forward about each item of the vocabulary, and to evaluate them, emphasizing what is certain, rejecting the implausible, and discussing the more promising. We must never forget that etymologies are theories, not facts, but they need to be founded on a sound factual basis.

This small book is presented as a continuation of the volume *Compléments au Dictionnaire étymologique du grec ancien de Pierre Chantraine; Tome I*, published in 1977 by Guy Jacquouis and Bernard Devlamminck in the Bibliothèque des Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain. This covered only the first half of the alphabet (A–K), and although basically a supplement to Chantraine's magisterial work, also referred to other etymological dictionaries. The second volume then promised has never appeared, and P. has therefore collected the relevant material for the second half of the alphabet. He has also added some material for the earlier part of the alphabet which had appeared too late for the previous volume.

It was a laborious task to collect all the reviews of Chantraine and index the comments of the reviewers, and the authors of both these volumes have earned our gratitude by making it easy to find where new theories are advanced. P. does not seem to have gone much further in his search for new etymological ideas, and there must be more material to be gleaned from a thorough search of the literature since Chantraine's dictionary appeared. But it is extremely useful to have this volume at hand. The names of Szemerényi and Ruijgh figure largely, as the authors of lengthy reviews replete with new ideas.

The second task of the composer of such a dictionary is to evaluate the various suggestions that have been made, and it is this which gives Chantraine's work its immense value. Instead of listing a long series of dubious theories, he often has the courage to dismiss them all