

also have been pointed out, even if this is not always the case (cf. already the myth of the Pamphylian Er in Plato's Republic, the Thracian Orpheus, the Hyperborean connections of such 'iatromanteis' as Aristeeas, Abaris and Empedocles, and the later examples mentioned at the very beginning of this review). The accounts of Plato's and Pythagoras' visits to Egypt are significant from this point of view. We might be justified in (carefully) speaking of pseudo-Orientalizing and pseudo-Egyptianizing processes in Greek religion and philosophy.

Fowden certainly simplifies things in the first chapter (p. 15) asserting that "in the Imperial Roman period men continued to believe sufficiently in the wisdom of Egypt to travel there and seek out its far-famed temple-dwellers". We are also dealing here with a touristic desire to see the marvels of Egypt and do not have to conclude that these travellers believed in ancient Egyptian wisdom.

A further problem not touched upon by Fowden is the historical dimension of the Egyptian influences: they are chronologically stratified in diverse periods. We know that Orphism and perhaps even Plato exhibit traces of Egyptian thought. To what extent, then, are such things as the alleged Egyptian elements in the Hermetic metaphysics already part of the pre-Hermetic Greek tradition?

When examining the literary antecedents or formal models for Hermetic literature Fowden points out the Egyptian origin of the diction in some parts of the technical Hermetica (the sacred literature of the priests and the so-called instruction genre). However, he passes the immense Greek impact on the form and content of at least the philosophical Hermetica in silence, even though these (esp. Poimandres) share many important features with the Greek apocalyptic genre.

The most remarkable contribution of Fowden seems to lie in the connection of the technical and philosophical texts as two aspects of a single "way of Hermes", as well as in the idea that in Egypt Hermetism was not only *Lesemysterien* but that there were also small Hermetic circles gathered around a teacher and devoted to study, asceticism, and pious fellowship. What we still miss, however, is a study where the Egyptian and Greek Hermes would be analyzed with equal emphasis.

*Jaakko Aronen*

*Giulia Sfameni Gasparro: Misteri e culti mistici di Demetra. Storia delle Religioni, 3. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 1986. 371 p. ITL 200.000.*

This well-informed and well-documented study is from the school of Ugo Bianchi, and it has the corresponding virtues and, some will add, vices. It attempts a typology of the various mystery cults connected with Demeter, concentrating on the relations between the Eleusinian and the Thesmophoric types of cult. The approach is very formal (and, some will say, 'post-structuralistic'): little attention is paid to aspects of a more or less speculative character, e.g. the contents of soteriology in its relation to fertility rites, the psychological, social and other aspects. Short shrift is also made of some features that might have been studied formally, such as the 'mito/rito' relation, the contacts with other mystery beliefs. (Orphic and/or Pythagorean, etc.), and the reminiscences of Elysian paradise traditions in Eleusinian beliefs.

The book covers a much more limited area than its size suggests; yet I believe it will turn out to be useful within its limits. Unfortunately it has no indexes.

H. Thesleff

*Marcel Simon: Le Christianisme et son contexte religieux.* Scripta varia I—II. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 23. J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen 1981. XX, 370 S. & CI, 371—852 S. DEM 245.

The present two volumes by the esteemed Strasbourg Professor Marcel Simon include 47 essays published between the years 1933 and 1979 in different journals. Most of the articles are concerned with the early Christian period, with particular regard to historical but also archaeological and methodological problems. Special emphasis is laid on the study of the contacts between various religious trends active in the first four centuries A.D. The relations of Christianity to Judaism as well as Paganism are illuminated from many angles of approach. It is a great pleasure for all interested in the history of early Christianity to have these important contributions collected in two handy volumes.

Mika Kajava

*La tradizione dell'enkrateia. Motivazioni ontologiche e protologiche* Atti del Colloquio Internazionale Milano, 20—23 aprile 1982, pubblicati a cura di Ugo Bianchi. Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma 1985. XXXI, 800 p. ITL 100.000.

The papers collected in this impressive volume are mainly concerned with 'enkratism' in Jewish, early Christian and Gnostic traditions. The term is here understood as implying certain kinds of ascetism, in particular sexual abstinence, with eschatological and metaphysical bearings. The theme no doubt is an important one, and many of the contributions are very learned and illuminating. The participants in this meeting were mostly Italian and French theologians and orientalists. Some readers will badly miss the approaches of the anthropologist, or the mythologist, or the feminist, or the psychologist. The ordinary classical scholar is surprised to find that *enkrateia* in Pythagoreanism, Cynicism, and Stoicism has received very little attention in the volume, and only the last paper (by D.M. Cosi) concentrates on any aspects of Neoplatonism without, however, taking account of the 'enkratist' background of the unio mystica doctrine. Plotinus' name is not mentioned even once on these 800 pages.

H. Thesleff

*Paolo Martino: Arbitrator.* Biblioteca di ricerche linguistiche e filologiche, 17. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche e Dipartimento di Studi glottoantropologici dell'Università di Roma "La Sapienza", Roma 1986. 128 p.