

The contributors raise new and interesting and in some cases freshly provocative questions, such as misogynist features in the history of western culture, the female ability – but also the restriction – to wield public and political power through male relatives. The lack of written sources by women leaves us to form our view of the women of antiquity based on records by men, which can often idealise women according to the moral values of their age. This can also obscure what women really did, and what their world, and behaviour, was like in reality. This volume also notes the problem in modern scholarship that some scholars still do not accept women's influence in antiquity, inflicting present-day cultural gender views onto their interpretations.

In this volume some strongly male-dominated areas in cultural history are investigated. Gráinne McLaughlin discusses in her article ancient female philosophers and scientists. She notes the unfortunate misogynist features of these fields, but in spite of those, through the support of male relatives, women could make achievements in the fields of mathematics, physics and philosophy. I found Nancy S. Rabinowitz's article "Politics of inclusion/exclusion in Attic tragedy" to be very interesting, where she examines the public/private and culture/nature dichotomies in Classical Athens. She considers how the male anxiety towards (politically) powerful women is portrayed in Greek tragedies, such as in the figures of Aeschylus' *Klytaimestra* and Euripides' *Medeia*. Rabinowitz also brings into the discussion how re-readings of these plays can benefit modern feminist thinking. Judith P. Hallet discusses how women could use power through their male relatives, and in the case of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, through her son. A mother is in a special position to instruct her son, but as Hallet argues, for a Roman mother to intervene in the political world of men even through advising her own son, shows a radical political stance (p. 37–8). Whether the son listened to his mother's advice, is a different matter, for Hallet notes that Cornelia failed to influence her son (p. 32).

This volume is an interesting book to anyone interested in the life of women in antiquity. It provides an unconventional and wider perspective on the roles of women in the societies of the Greek and Roman world. Also, the extensive bibliography and careful index prove to be useful for further reading.

Sanna-Ilaria Kittelä

Religions orientales – culti misterici. Neue Perspektiven – nouvelles perspectives – prospettive nuove. Edited by CORINNE BONNET – JÖRG RÜPKE – PAOLO SCARPI. Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 16. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2006. ISBN 3-515-08871-7. 269 S. EUR 56.

The book "Religions orientales – culti misterici" is published as a result of the joint inter-European research project "Les religions orientales dans le monde gréco-romain" (2005–2006). One crucial aim of the project was to re-evaluate and update the concept of "oriental religions" that has both inspired and haunted historians of ancient religions since the publication of Franz Cumont's classic *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* in 1906. Some of the book's eighteen articles deal with historiography and previous uses of the concept of "oriental religions" and related terminology. Some articles focus on a considerably narrower area, moving towards new interpretations of specific aspects of "oriental religions".

The edited volume is trilingual, reflecting the international research team behind it, i.e., French, German and Italian. The trilingual editing process has resulted in some minor illogicalities in the book's layout. The title of the book is in French (*religions orientales*) and Italian (*culti misterici*, cf. *religioni orientali*) but why not in German? The subtitle is in German (*Neue Perspektiven*), French (*nouvelles perspectives*) and Italian (*prospettive nuove*). The "table of contents" is first in German (*Inhaltsverzeichnis*), then Italian (*indice*) and last French (*table des matières*) etc.

The book has three parts. The first part is "Pratiques, agents", the second "Une "théologie" en images? Isis et les autres" and the third "Les cultes à mystères". The articles are not numbered. The book has both an *Index rerum* and an *Index locorum*, both in German.

In the following, I shall deal with the articles in the order they are in the book. In his article "Organisationsmuster religiöser Spezialisten im kultischen Spektrum Roms" (pp. 13–26), Jörg Rüpke asks whether the organizational structure and inner hierarchy of the so-called "oriental cults" separate them from all other cults including the Roman state cult. Rüpke compares material from the cults of Isis, Cybele, Jupiter Dolichenus, Jewish synagogues in Rome and Christianity with that of the *Ordo sacerdotum domus augustae* and, very briefly, of other Roman priestly colleges. His conclusion is that no typology emerges that would support the uniqueness of oriental cults in this respect. There were some similarities among these cults as to their cult terminology (*sacerdotes*, *scribae* and *-phoroi*) but their differences appear more compelling to Rüpke. He also makes an extremely interesting point when saying that, of all the oriental cults, Christianity seems to have come closest to the adaptation of the spirit of Roman priestly hierarchy: from the very early times of its existence, Christianity developed an organization that did not reward spiritual competence but more mundane ambitions with an ecclesiastical career.

Christopher Steimle also studies social patterns in a religious context in his article "Das Heiligtum der ägyptischen Götter in Thessaloniki und die Vereine in seinem Umfeld" (pp. 27–38). According to Steimle, the sanctuary of the Egyptian deities in Thessaloniki offered a forum for subtle social differentiation through its *thiasoi* or cult associations. In one and the same sanctuary, there were many *thiasoi* that were organized according to their members' social and cultic statuses. E.g., in *IG X 2.1, 58*, we find a group of *hieraphoroi*, carriers of sacred objects in cult processions, who were also *synklitai*, table companions of a respective social layer also possibly outside the cult community.

The article by Françoise Van Haeperen, "Fonctions des autorités politiques et religieuses romaines en matière de «cultes orientaux»" (pp. 39–51), excellently fulfils, for its part, the aim of this book – re-evaluation. Most of her arguments are not brand new but they are well composed and explicitly set in the context of oriental religions. According to Van Haeperen, Roman authorities intervened in the cultic life of oriental religions if they were "official" (i.e., their festivals were in the Roman calendar) and "public" (i.e., their sanctuary was built on public land). The authorities intervened because it was their job to do so: to participate in public festivals, manage cult sites and assign places for erecting statues and altars. Only on very rare occasions did Roman authorities get involved in the matters of private cults and, if they did so, it seems to have happened at these communities' own request. Van Haeperen's point is that there was no difference whether a cult was "oriental" or "non-oriental" but whether it was public (such as the cults of Magna Mater and Egyptian deities) or private (such as the cults of Mithras and Sol). Private cults could, on the other

hand, become more visible in Roman society through their voluntary involvement with the authorities: some *mithraea*, for example, were built on public land. Involvement with religious authorities brought further legitimacy to the cult socially.

Alfred Schäfer's article "L'associazionismo dionisiaco come fenomeno urbano dell'epoca imperiale romana" (pp. 53–63) discusses Dionysiac cult communities and their social organization in Ephesus and the Lower Danube. The article also describes rather recent excavations at the sanctuary of Liber Pater in Apulum in Dacia. Material findings from this sanctuary are rich in ceramics, which will enable forthcoming interpretations about the cult practices of this community.

Laurent Bricault poses an interesting research-historical question in his article "Du nom des images d'Isis polymorphe" (pp. 75–95): in what ways, if any, do the typological names attributed to a deity by researchers correspond to that deity's visual imagery and epigraphic names? Is there a logic to calling a representation of Isis Isis Boubastis or Isis Taposiris or Isis "à la voile"? For researchers, maybe, says Bricault, but ancient sources elude systematization.

Ennio Sanzi's article "Dèi ospitanti e dèi ospitati nel patrimonio iconografico dei culti orientali: Ancora riflessioni storico-religiose sul sincretismo religioso del secondo ellenismo" (pp. 97–112) discusses deities that appear in connection with the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the epigraphic material. Sanzi's conclusion is that each of the associated deities was invited to join the Dolichenian pantheon in order to emphasize a certain aspect of the ruling deity at a Dolichenum, e.g., Asklepios and Salus to enhance "salutary aspects" of the Dolichenian cult in question.

Francesca Prescendi's article "Riflessioni e ipotesi sulla tauroctonia mitraica e sacrificio romano" (pp. 113–122) makes an illuminating comparison between the Mithraic tauroctony and Roman sacrifice. According to Prescendi, the tauroctony, or the killing of the bull by Mithras, was not a sacrifice in the eyes of the Romans. First, the victim was not willing but recalcitrant. Secondly, the tauroctonic scene showed the god in action and the "victim" bleeding. In comparison to this, Roman sacrificial scenes encompassed an atmosphere of near serenity. Thus, the Romans had no choice but to interpret the tauroctony as a visual representation of a primordial myth, Mithras turning chaos to order by subjugating the bull.

Nicole Belayche's "Note sur l'imagerie des divinités «orientales» dans le Proche-Orient romain" (pp. 123–133) tries to trace "oriental" and other features in the imageries of "oriental deities" in the Near East. Belayche says that in this part of the Roman Empire, Jupiter Heliopolitanus and Jupiter Dolichenus were "Roman" by name but "oriental" by iconography. In the image of Mithras, local Near Eastern iconographies were mixed with Roman influences from some Western provinces. What possibly united oriental cult iconography was the strong Hellenistic undercurrent with its Greek and local oriental imprints, says Belayche.

Stéphanie Wyler studies the Dionysiac wall painting from Lanuvium and compares it with the frescoes in the Villa Farnesina in her "Images dionisiaques à Rome: à propos d'une fresque augustéenne de Lanuvium" (pp. 135–145). Using this material, she argues that Dionysiac imagery was accepted more unambiguously into the Augustan visual programme than Isiac/Egyptian themes were. She also notes that Egyptian themes had been part of Roman visual imagery for about a hundred years before Augustus and had probably, by the

time of Augustus, lost much of their religious – but none of their decorative – value in the context of artistically expressed exoticism.

In her article "Images et culte: pratiques «romaines» / influences «orientales»" (pp. 147–158), Sylvia Estienne compares the rite of *lavatio* (ritual washing) of the statues of Magna Mater and Venus Verticordia. One could hastily draw the conclusion that the *lavatio* of Magna Mater must have been an "oriental" ritual whereas that of Venus Verticordia must have been a "Roman" one. Estienne clearly shows that this was not the case. What then remains culturally distinguishably "oriental" in the ritual of Magna Mater, says Estienne, is the strong role played by priests in it. In Roman ritual, the actor was often a collective – as in the case of Venus Verticordia, the female population of Rome – or, if an individual, no mediator was needed between the worshipper and her god.

In her article "Il *Magos* e la *Pharmakis*: Excursus attraverso il lessico storico in ottica di genere" (pp. 163–179), Ileana Chirassi studies the various names (e.g., *magos*, *pharmakis*) used for practitioners of magic in ancient Greek and Roman sources and their magical practices. Greek sources speak more positively about magicians than the Roman ones whose attitude was more reserved and controlling. Chirassi's article also includes a discussion about Roman legislation against magic up to late antiquity. The gender aspect comes up in her handling of the "known practitioners" of this art starting from Greek mythology and Kirke and ending with the notion that, in late antique Christian legislation, it was only male *magi* who were explicitly condemned to the stake, not their female counterparts, *striges*.

Giulia Sfameni Gasparro's article "Misteri e culti orientali: un problema storico-religioso" (pp. 181–218) is as rich as her long academic career in the field of oriental religions. Sfameni Gasparro makes an important point when noting that some of the oriental gods were in fact Greek in their origin and that they had been "Orientalized" only as a consequence of their travels to Rome via the "Orient". This adds some flavour to the always topical discussion about the geographic origins of oriental religions.

When it comes to their "time of birth", the Hellenistic era seems to have been decisive for the development of oriental religions or "mysteries", as is well attested in the article "I misteri e la politica dei primi Tolemei" (pp. 211–218) by Alessandra Coppola. Coppola traces elements of Greek mysteries back in the religious reconstructions made during the reign of the first Ptolemies in Egypt. Cultic connections with Greece were *Realpolitik* as well as the adaptation of both Greek and Egyptian elements into the new cults fabricated by the Ptolemies. Religion played a crucial role in the establishment of Greek rule over Egypt in the 3rd century BC, in the process of which the rule itself also became "Egyptianized". Ptolemaic Egypt makes thus a prime example of what a challenging task it is to try to differentiate among cultural elements (Greek, Egyptian, "Oriental") even in such a case in which the intermingling of cultures and religions was sought after and favoured by the political establishment. We know the who, the what and the why of the story and yet we cannot separate cultural influences from each other when we apparently see them in Ptolemaic Egypt.

Anne-Françoise Jaccottet's article "Un dieu, plusieurs mystères? Les différents visages des mystères dionysiaques" (pp. 219–230) discusses enlighteningly the ancient uses of old research terminology about mysteries. First, she argues, there were many mysteries of Dionysus, all different in their cultic scope and social composition. Secondly, the Dionysiac associations did not necessarily express their ritual functions in the terminology most known

to us (μυστήρια, *mysteria*, "mysteries"). Before Hellenistic times, the cult of Dionysus was called *teletai* ("mystic rites"); in Hellenistic times, *teletai* or *teletè* ("initiation", literally "making perfect") and *orgia* ("secret rites", "orgies"); and, in imperial times, also *mysteria* ("secret rites", "mysteries" [my translations, based on Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1994]). For example, the term μύστης, *mystes* or initiate is known in connection with the cult of Dionysus only from the 1st century AD onwards. That is when we can talk about the *mysteria* of Dionysus, says Jaccottet.

Giovanni Lanfranchi's article "Nuove prospettive sulla teologia e sul culto di Inanna/Ištar: la pervasività del modello mesopotamico nel I millennio a. C." (pp. 231–246) steps a few centuries back in time from Graeco-Roman period. Lanfranchi has studied the cult of Ištar that spread in the Near East during the first four centuries of the first millennium BC through the aggressive expansion of the Assyrian empire. Lanfranchi follows in his interpretation the "Finnish School" (Parpola, Lapinkivi) on Ištar as a "cosmic spirit" whose cult expressed a strong denial of material and bodily existence in favour of the spiritual; emasculation being the ritual perfection of this tendency. Lanfranchi connects the Mesopotamian cult with the Mediterranean world through the cult of Cybele. Due to Assyrian cultural influences, Lanfranchi argues, the Anatolian cult of Cybele absorbed the ritual act of emasculation – that did not exist in any Anatolian cult before – into its cultic repertoire.

The research project "Les religions orientales dans le monde gréco-romain" held three seminars in the years 2005–2006, this book being the fruit of the last of the three. The book well fulfils its given aim, the re-evaluation of "oriental religions" both in concept and content. It would be a great favour to the international research community to get the other two seminars published as well in the *Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge* that has proved an easily accessible and rather widely distributed publication series in its relatively short period of existence (since 1999).

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ANGELO MERIANI: *Sulla musica greca antica. Studi e ricerche*. Università degli Studi di Salerno, Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 28. Alfredo Guida Editori, Napoli 2003. ISBN 88-7188-794-8. 150 pp. EUR 16.30.

Angelo Meriani's *Sulla musica greca antica* is a short collection of his articles on ancient Greek music. It consists of three revised versions of his previously published studies and includes a preface written by Luigi Enrico Rossi. In these chapters Meriani has concentrated on analysing short passages about Greek music instead of dealing with larger themes and thus every little detail is given due attention.

The first chapter treats fr. 124 Wehrli, a paragraph from Σύμμικτα συμποτικά of Aristoxenus quoted by Athenaeus (632a–b), which deals with the "barbarisation" of culture in Posidonia where citizens, Greek in origin, were turning into Etruscans or Romans because they were changing their language and all their customs. Nevertheless, Posidonians were still celebrating one characteristically Greek festival, in which they came together and recalled ancient words and practices and lamented over them. In this passage the speaker (Aristoxenus himself or someone who shares his conservative views on music) compares the