BOOK REVIEWS


Once again, Robin Hägg organized a seminar that brought together philologists, archaeologists and historians of religion. He chose as the subject of the meeting a genre of evidence for ancient Greek cults, which tends to be disregarded, as it has become a specialized field of its own. Thus the seminar had to bridge a widening gap. The result is extremely valuable. Sarah Aleshire asks (pp. 9-16) whether our modern distinction between “private” and “state cult,” e.g., in the healing cult of Asklepios at Athens, are ancient categories. Kevin Clinton shows (17-34) for the same cult how the new god’s festivals form part of an established and flourishing feast, the Epidauria. Michael Jameson presents “Theoxenia” (pp. 35-57), which originally formed a part of his unpublished 1949 dissertation. The old question of how the gods are imagined to take part in the human institution of social meals, can now be answered with newly discovered material, which is comprehensively presented here. György Németh gives a new interpretation for IG I3 4 as for the intestines of sacrificial animals. From Emily Kearns we learn about the variety and the use of cakes, which occur often in sacrificial ritual (65-70), and Tullia Linders reconstructs the different menus of religious feasts at Delos out of the epigraphical invoices (71-79). In Gullög Nordquist’s paper a full orchestra of “Musicians in Greek Cult” accompanies celebrations (81-93). Fritz Graf’s comment on an oracle against pestilence, which orders a ritual with voodoo dolls, is published here in summary (95-96). A recently found lex sacra from Lykosoura/Peloponnese (Ioannis and Eveline Loucas, 97-99) prohibits the wearing of luxurious garments and gold jewelry within the sanctuary of the goddess Despoina; moreover pregnant women are excluded from initiation. Robin Hägg convinced Petros Themelis to give the first overview of the excavations of the sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia at Messene (101-122), the setting of female initiation rites.

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Menelaos Christopoulos studies Erechtheus on the Athenian acropolis in three occurrences, as a distinct hero, as a by-name of Poseidon, and as the Erechtheian sea (123-130). The last two papers deal with curse tablets, a field in (non-)classical studies that has gained much interest in recent times. David R. Jordan treats late feasts for the ghosts (131-143) and Henk Versnel shows convincingly that the formula *pepremenos* in curse tablets could not have meant “sold”, but “burnt by fire/fever” (145-154); and this fire lightens a torch to the next seminar, thanks to Robin Hägg.

Many illustrations provide further evidence; a thorough index of 26 pages enables the reader to find the many new details which are offered in this excellent and coherent volume. It should be part of every library with an interest in Greek religion.

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In the aftermath of the arising of the form of political Hinduism associated with the Rāmājanabhūmi campaign the possible impact of scholarship on the religio-political events in India has become a growing concern. The conference on which this collection of essays is based took place in October 1990 in a period when this style of political Hinduism seemed particular threatening. The editors criticize the concept of Hinduism as a coherent and unified system and argue that Hinduism was a nineteenth century creation which until recently remained an urban middle class phenomenon but which has been invoked lately by politicians to create a powerful religio-political Hinduism. While a few of the essays (Friedhelm Hardy on *Ācāryahdayam*, Heinrich von Stietencron on *Somaśambhupaddhati*) detail pre-nineteenth century conceptions of religious identity, mostly the essays discuss nineteenth and twentieth century constructions, the most important essays being...