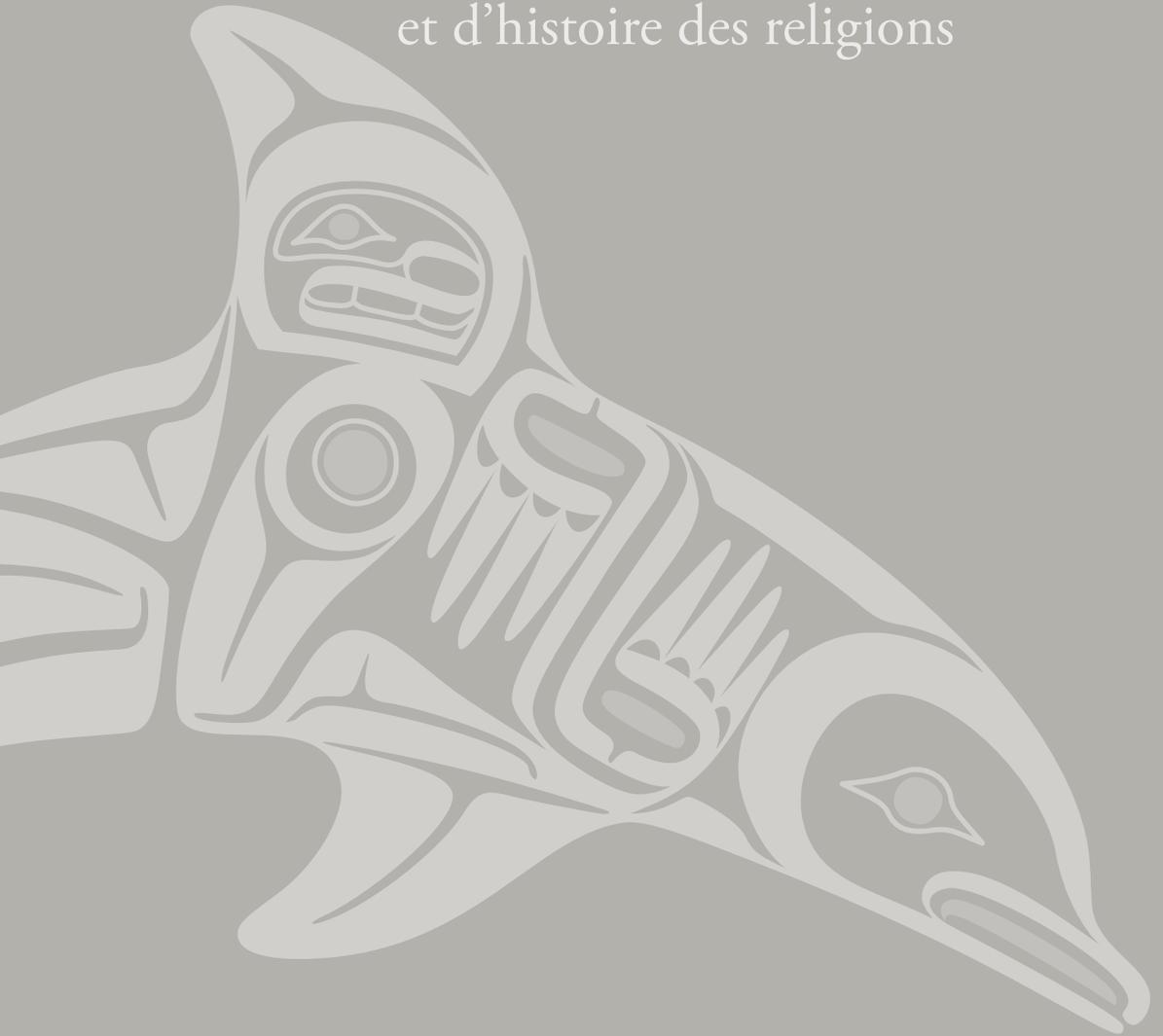


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ANNE-FRANÇOISE JACCOTTET éd., *Rituels en image – Images de rituel. Iconographie – Histoire des religions – Archéologie, EG&A* vol. 9, Bern, Peter Lang, 2021, 262 p. + 47 plates, ISBN 978-3-0343-3908-7.

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The volume under consideration originated in a conference that took place at the University of Geneva in March 2015. It discusses the complex subject of the polyvalent interconnections between images and rituals in Greek and Roman cultures, although two papers deal with Etruria, two with the Near East, and one with Byzantium. The volume consists of 18 papers and an introduction by the editor of the volume, all in French. The papers are organized in five different thematic sections and the publication concludes with summaries both in French and English and 47 plates. There are no indices.

In her introduction (« Représenter un rituel, représenter du rituel: en guise d'introduction », pp. 7-17), Anne-Françoise Jaccottet addresses some of the basic questions raised at the conference and in the volume: What is the essence of representations of rituals? What is the role of images in rituals? How do rituals affect images? How should scholarship deal with rituals and images of rituals from a methodological perspective? The author uses an Augustan altar from Pompeii as her main example, but adds three so-called Mysian reliefs and a relief from Brauron to her discussion. Jaccottet stresses a rather well-known and accepted scholarly assumption that images of rituals do not depict a specific ritual, but a ritual in a non-photographic way. In addition, she emphasizes that one has to always consider the medium on which a ritual is depicted, the function of said object, and the spatial context in which it was used and thus seen.

The first section (*La construction de l'image rituelle*) consists of four papers and deals with compositional issues of images depicting rituals. In his paper (« Ce que l'image fait du rituel: variations attiques », pp. 21-29), François Lissarrague emphasizes, based on Attic vases (all but one in the red-figure technique) and

a relief from Brauron, that representations of rituals are not photographic or documentary renderings, but rather visual collages of ritual elements, ritual actors, and ritual moments. The artists created visual metonymies that the ancient viewer could read (or not) depending on knowledge and experience. In her contribution (« *Semiosis* et techniques. Supports vasculaires, rhétorique visuelle et codes perspectifs dans l'imagerie sacrificielle », pp. 31-44), Monique Halm-Tisserant focuses on black-and-red-figure sacrificial scenes and their spatial arrangements. She notes that there is a tendency among black-figure artists to focus on long processions, while red-figure vase painters tend to show shorter scenes mostly around or in the immediate vicinity of an altar. I am not convinced by Halm-Tisserant's hypothesis that artists' unwillingness to depict the moment of the sacrificial killing is not due to a kind of a visual taboo, but rather to technical difficulties to « associer à l'ordre des poses la peinture du *pathos* et de des affects ». Laurent Hugot focuses in his paper (« Gestes et attitudes devant l'autel en Étrurie », pp. 45-55) on Etruscan altar scenes found in various media. The author offers a new and rather convincing reading of a scene on an amphora of unknown provenance in a private collection in Basel that shows two figures, several dogs, and two altars. The presence of the two altars is explained on the basis of two different ritual acts as part of the same sacrificial ritual: after the killing of the animal (not shown), the priest interprets the entrails on one of the altars and then burns them on the other one. For Hugot, this explains also the presence of two altars in numerous Etruscan sanctuaries, which has been usually seen as evidence for two divinities receiving cultic honors at two separate altars. In her paper, Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel (« Un "mariage sacré" pour Nanna?

Iconographie et épigraphie d'un rituel du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire av. n. è. », pp. 57-66) offers a new interpretation of a relief from Ur (2450-2400 BCE) in the British Museum (BM 118561), whose two friezes were identified in the past as a depiction of two phases of the same ritual, the so-called sacred marriage of a priestess to Nanna, comparable to the union between the king and Inana. According to the author, the relief shows not only two different temporal stages, but also two distinct spaces for two closely interconnected rites of the same ritual. Although Rendu Loisel sees some sort of sacred-marriage ritual depicted in the relief, she disagrees with the traditional view that a physical union is implied or that it was even part of the actual ritual. For her, the relief shows the symbolical guiding of a young woman into the house of her husband by her father: the king guides in reality his daughter, the priestess of Nanna, into the temple of the god.

The second section (*Ambiances rituelles*) consists of three papers that address aspects of the overall setting – not only in a spatial sense – in ritual imagery. In her paper (« Le thiasos dionysiaque: de la danse au cortège », pp. 69-75), Cornelia Isler-Kerényi focuses on the Dionysian *thiasos* and its development in Athenian vase painting of the V<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The author argues that around 460 BCE, the *thiasos* was transformed from a group of dancers into a procession. Furthermore, Isler-Kerényi hypothesizes that in the years after the Persian Wars, Dionysos was « humanized » and considered to be more closely associated with his worshippers; this is exactly the process reflected in the images on the vases of this time. It is also for this reason, according to the author, that we see an increasing number of vases from this period visualizing the god's biography (for example, Dionysos as an infant or Dionysos and Ariadne). The question Isler-Kerényi leaves unanswered is, however, why exactly this « humanization » process takes place around 470 BCE. Annie Verbanck-Piérard argues in her paper (« Les

scènes d'hommage à la divinité sur les vases attiques de la figure rouge tardive: ambiance de rituels – rituels d'ambiance? », pp. 77-90) that in the late V<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the IV<sup>th</sup> century BCE a growing number of scenes on Attic vases depict a divinity in the center as recipient of cultic honors, surrounded by anonymous individuals, secondary divine figures such as Nikai or Eroses, and religious paraphernalia. It is primarily, though not exclusively, Dionysos, Herakles, Apollo, and Poseidon who appear in such scenes. Verbanck-Piérard suggests that the ritual-related nature of these images cannot be denied. Such scenes could have been associated with concrete Attic festivals, not, however, as documentary renderings, but rather as an abstract means of remembrance and commemoration. The so-called sacro-idyllic landscapes in Roman stucco reliefs and wall paintings stand in the center of Stéphanie Wyler's contribution (« *Sacra per topia*: images de rituels dans les "paysages sacro-idylliques" romains », pp. 91-103). The author shows that although many details in these images are realistic and an excellent source of information for modern scholars, the landscapes and rituals as a whole are entirely fictional and construct an ideal religious world of unspoiled piety outside the boundaries of any urban context.

The third section (*Iconographie d'objets rituels*) is in a sense more material-oriented and discusses in four papers iconographic aspects of specific ritual objects. In his paper (« Sémiologie de l'image: méthodologie pour l'interprétation des images rituelles de l'Anatolie hittite », pp. 107-120), Patrick M. Michel focuses on the iconography and function of clay and silver vases (*pithoi* and drinking vases respectively) in Hittite religious activities. The author argues that the clay *pithoi* functioned as containers for the grain used to prepare the bread consumed in agricultural spring and fall rituals. The silver drinking vessels were used at the same festivals both for drinking and libations. Sandrine Huber dis-

cusses in her paper (« Des images au service des premiers rituels à Érétie », pp. 121-131) a category of vases (high-necked jugs) found in five different cult places in Eretria. Interestingly, this type of vase is attested only in the VII<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the VI<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Such vases have been found in neighboring Boeotia as well, but in funerary contexts. The author argues that the abstract and general – though not generic – character of the ritual scenes decorating the vases did not intend to describe ritual activities; the depicted scenes instead « ont transformé la réalité en signes abrégés ». In her paper (« Faisceaux et guirlandes, entre iconographie et réalité: images, gestes, rites et finances éleusiniennes », pp. 133-154), Christina Mitsopoulou brings together iconographic evidence and archaeological materials in her discussion of a specific ritual vase type (the so-called *kernos*) from Eleusis. The author suggests that these vases were decorated with real myrtle branches around their necks. Although such wreath-like decorative elements have not been preserved, it seems that the branches were originally held together and fastened around the vase-necks by means of lead rings made of thin metal sheets. Similar objects were holding together the branches of which initiatory scepters were made at Eleusis, as shown in relevant imagery. Valérie Huet discusses in her paper (« Le sacrifice romaine en image ou des questions de perception de rituels: à propos de la visibilité de l'autel et de ses images », pp. 155-169) three altars as case studies for the use of sacrificial imagery on Roman altars: the Neptune altar in Terni, the altar of Manlius from Caere, and an altar in Turin. The author suggests that the choice of the specific images found on the altars was a very conscious one and reflected both the functions of the altars and the cultic particularities of the regions in which each altar was used. More importantly, Huet argues that the movement around and the visual experience of the altars during the performance of rituals « activated » their relief decoration,

so that the images were transformed from visualized descriptions of ritual activity into integral parts thereof.

With five individual contributions, the fourth section (*Images rituelles dans le sanctuaire*) is the lengthiest and deals with ritual imagery in the specific context of a sanctuary. Hélène Collard focuses in her paper (« Images et rituel, questions de méthode: l'exemple des *pinakes* de Locres », pp. 173-187) on the well-known Locrian *pinakes*. The author briefly analyzes ritual objects present in the various scenes: altars, *louteria*, *thymiateria*, and *kalathoi* appear to be among the most often-used objects. Collard suggests that such objects function as signs, perhaps even as a kind of attribute in the scenes depicted on the reliefs, in order to identify and enhance Persephone's divine essence. The reliefs offer important anthropological insights into the nature of the visualized rituals and the participants in those rituals. Although the reliefs are in no way documentary depictions, they do seem to be associated with rituals connected with young women about to enter marriage. In his paper (« Le trône bachique de Bolsena. De l'ancre à la lumière, au cœur d'un parcours rituel », pp. 189-202), Jean-Marie Pailler discusses an extremely important find, the Bacchic throne of Bolsena-Volsinii, originally situated in a sanctuary of the Etruscan god Fufluns and dating to the end of the III<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Throne and sanctuary were destroyed in the 180s BCE, in the aftermath of the Bacchanalia scandal. The author argues that the sanctuary was the stage of initiation rituals involving mimetic *katabaseis* and *anodoi*, with the throne being the focal point of these rituals. In addition, Pailler emphasizes the role of Semele in these religious activities. Sylvia Estienne discusses in her paper (« Les Dioscures entre deux rivages. À propos du relief d'Argénidas », pp. 203-213) a Laconian relief from the II<sup>nd</sup> century BCE found together with two further reliefs in 1709 in Este (Casale). It is a votive relief showing the dedicator, Argenidas, stand-

ing before the Dioskouroi (or their statues). Between the divine twins and Argenidas two amphoras on a pedestal and an altar can be seen. Behind Argenidas, a port and two *dokana* are depicted. The author argues against previously expressed theories that the relief was dedicated to a local sanctuary by a Laconian merchant. The relief was most probably brought to Italy sometime in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and ended up decorating a suburban *domus* or a villa in Ateste in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE or early 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. I am not entirely convinced by Estienne's hypothesis that the scene depicts a ritual similar to the *theoxenia* in which « les amphores peuvent être perçues comme un symbole des jumeaux eux-mêmes ». In his paper (« Sacrifice d'animaux dans les provinces romaines d'Asie Mineure: représentations de rituels en contexte », pp. 215-227), Günther Schörner offers a very helpful summary – supported by statistical graphs – of sacrificial images on coins and reliefs from Asia Minor in Imperial times. Unfortunately, the analysis of the collected evidence remains rather superficial and does not go beyond previously expressed and rather well-accepted ideas. For the coins, the author concludes, for example, that sacrificial imagery should be « lues et interprétées dans le contexte de la concurrence entre les cités ». In a similar way, Schörner suggests that the preference of depicting cattle in sacrificial scenes on reliefs « peut s'expliquer par la grande valeur de l'animal et le prestige qui lui est conféré ». Claude Bérard's paper (« "Nous qui dans ce mystère sommes l'icône des chérubins" », pp. 229-236) is the only one in the volume dealing with Byzantine iconography. In the *Cherubikon*, sung at the Great Entrance of the Orthodox liturgy, the congregation is addressed as « we who in this mystery are the icons/images of the cherubs ». Based on three icons of the Cretan School from the xvii<sup>th</sup> century and frescoes in the cathedral of Saint Elias in Yaroslavl (also xvii<sup>th</sup> century), the author argues that the icons and paintings showing cherubs involved in ritu-

al activities are a means to visualize not simply the interconnectedness, but rather the merging of the celestial mysteries with those performed in a church during the liturgy, as sung in the *Cherubikon*.

The fifth section of the volume (*Regards croisés entre un archéologue-icônologue et une historienne des religions... en guise de conclusion*) consists of two papers, which were conceived as concluding remarks on the entire volume and the topic it explores. In his contribution (« Le rituel et le rôle des images dans la cité », pp. 239-245), Alain Schnapp offers – based exclusively on written sources, which interestingly include the *Book of Wisdom* – a quasi-philosophical take on the birth of images in Greek culture, with a brief excursus into what the author considers to be an « image de culte ». Among other things, Schnapp sheds light on the static nature of images as opposed to the mobility of the ritual act or the spoken word, the latter emphasized famously by Pindar (*Nem.* 5,1-6). Using Mithraic iconography as a case-study, Nicole Belayche stresses in her paper (« Rituels en image – Images de rituel: quelques réflexions sur textes et images », pp. 247-254) that ancient artistic expressions that focus on ritual activities are not documentary visualizations of specific rituals or moments of rituals, they are « jamais la *réalité* des rituels ». Furthermore, the author emphasizes that visual and textual evidence should be understood as different « langages », but « le passage de l'un à l'autre n'est pas une "traduction" ».

The volume concludes with summaries in French and English (pp. 255-262) for 15 of the 18 contributions. One, unfortunately, has to note that the English translations of the French summaries would have profited enormously from a thorough editing. Numerous figures, many of them in color, in 47 plates can be found at the end of the publication.

The vast majority of the volume's papers offer insightful and, in most cases, also new observations on the complicated dialogue be-

tween images and rituals. Nevertheless, the volume, like so many published conferences, «suffers» from the fact that the excellent individual contributions do not amount to a broader discussion of the main issue raised already in the title: «rituels en image – images de rituel». The decision to conclude the publication with two very interesting contributions, which, however, were focused on mostly ancient Greek written sources (Schnapp) or analyzed yet again a very specific type of material evidence, Mithraic images (Belayche), instead of offering more general concluding remarks that would have truly attempted to bring together the vast geographical and chronological perspective(s) of the volume was not – in my view – a wise choice. In addition, the repetition in almost every paper that rituals in art are not documentary or photographic me-

mentos of real rituals – an idea in which not many classical archaeologists or art historians believe anyway – limited the scope of possible (methodological, heuristic, theoretical, interpretive) problems that scholars face, when dealing with the indeed extremely interesting and multifaceted question of what exactly is the connection between rituals and rituals in art. Having noted the above, one must still point out that there is plenty to learn from and think further about in every single contribution of the volume.

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FRANCESCO MASSA, NICOLE BELAYCHE éds., *Les Philosophes et les mystères dans l'empire romain*, Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège (« Religions », vol. 11), 2021, 250 p., ISBN 978-2-87562-268-6.

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Ce livre, issu d'un colloque organisé à la Fondation Hardt en 2017, représente un des maillons d'un ensemble de travaux récemment publiés dans le cadre de deux projets de recherche sur les cultes à mystères dans le monde grec et romain, animés par ses éditeurs, Francesco Massa et Nicole Belayche: le premier, centré sur les rapports entre les mystères grecs et romains et les mystères chrétiens, mené à l'Université de Genève (2015-2018), a été financé par le Fonds national suisse de la recherche; l'autre, orienté par les acteurs spécialisés des cultes à mystères (2014-2018), a été porté par l'équipe parisienne d'« Anthropologie et histoire des mondes antiques ».

Cet ensemble de travaux est structuré par cinq problématiques: les discours visuels (images dionysiaques, éleusiniennes, mithriaques, isiaques, etc.) comme source sur les rituels mystériques, complémentaire par rapport à la documentation textuelle (NICOLE

BELAYCHE, FRANCESCO MASSA éd., *Mystery Cults in Visual Representations in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Leyde-Boston, E. J. Brill, 2021); la place des cultes à mystères dans la littérature polémique chrétienne (FRANCESCO MASSA éd., *Mystery Cults and Heresies in the Roman Empire: Polemics, Identities and Interactions = Religion in the Roman Empire 4/2*, 2018); les cultes à mystères dans les sources latines, littéraires et épigraphiques (FRANCESCO MASSA, DAMIEN NELIS éd., *Mystery Cults in Latin Texts = Mnemosyne 75/4*, 2022); la relation entre cultes à mystères et philosophie (le thème du présent livre); enfin, un dernier colloque a été consacré à la question de l'existence d'un « tournant » dans l'utilisation des références aux mystères au II<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère (NICOLE BELAYCHE, FRANCESCO MASSA, PHILIPPE HOFFMANN éd., *Les Mystères au II<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère: un tournant*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2021). Cet ensemble de travaux renouvelle de manière si-