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le monde méditerranéen comme une marque de générosité, et un bienfait pour tous les peuples (pp. 343-362). Si la littérature juive a commencé à employer le vocabulaire civique pour définir ses réalités durant l'époque hellénistique (pp. 368-373), à l'époque romaine la question se complexifie, car l'appartenance au peuple juif repose sur deux types d'alliance : l'alliance abrahamique, donc l'élément ethnique, et l'alliance sinaïtique, c'est-à-dire la reconnaissance d'une loi commune révélée à Moïse (p. 342). Un Gentil qui se convertit peut être vu soit comme un nouveau citoyen (c'est le cas chez Philon d'Alexandrie, Flavius Josèphe et, dans une certaine mesure, dans la documentation épigraphique : pp. 373-384), soit comme un fils d'Abraham, associé au peuple (pp. 398-426), à l'image de l'adoption qui, dans le monde romain, permet à un individu d'entrer pleinement dans une autre famille. Au contraire du droit romain, qui inclut la possibilité de perdre ses droits civiques, les rabbins estiment qu'un converti, même s'il viole les commandements, ne peut plus redevenir un Gentil (p. 397).

Ce résumé ne prétend pas couvrir toute la richesse de l'analyse. Il vise seulement à montrer l'étendue de l'enquête et la diversité des domaines explorés. Katell Berthelot propose de voir dans la littérature juive, majoritairement rabbinique du fait de sa richesse, des adaptations du modèle romain et des réponses diverses, soulignant que l'on ne peut s'en tenir à une analyse dichotomique entre adoption et résistance. À ce titre, ce livre pourra intéresser aussi bien les spécialistes du judaïsme ancien que ceux du monde romain, et tous les chercheurs intéressés par les questions liées à l'identité et aux transferts culturels. Il sera assurément un ouvrage incontournable pour les études à venir sur les rapports entre les Juifs et les Romains et sur la construction de l'identité juive durant l'époque du second Temple.

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MARINELLA CERAVOLO, *L'« historiola » nella Mesopotamia antica. Mito, rito e performatività*, Roma, Bulzoni (« Chi siamo. Storia delle religioni » 50), 2022, 344 pages, ISBN : 978-88-6897-284-4.

The book under review treats the so-called *historiola* (« small mythical story ») at the intersection between Assyriology and religious studies. The primary objective of the author is to fundamentally reconceptualize the prevailing notion, which currently views *historiolae* as mere literary embellishments of ritual, and instead to shed light on them through the theory of linguistic and performative acts.

This exposition is the product of the author's PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Rome, La Sapienza. The book is divided into three main parts: « Genesis and development of the *historiola* », « From general to particular », and « Return to general ».

Finally, the book concludes with an appendix that provides editions and translations of the seven analyzed *historiolae*.

The first part provides an overview of the current state of the art on the *historiola* from the fields of anthropology, linguistics, speech act theory, and history of religions. The opening chapter, « *Historiola*: The creation of a tool » (§ I), delves into the detailed history of studies on the term *historiola*, tracing its origins from its first attestation to more recent research. The aim is to demonstrate that *historiola* is an etic term, « the artificial product of a purely academic classification effort » (p. 85), but still valuable for academic purposes. The

second chapter, «What is the *historiola* for us today?» (§ II), seeks to define the *historiola* by examining its main features and relations to myth, time, analogy, and performativity. In the section about myth, the debate centers around whether the *historiola* refers to a macro-myth or if it is an *ad hoc* creation. The proposed solution is that the *historiola* draws on so-called «mythical capital» and reworks it according to the ritual, striking a balance between coherence with the myth and specific flexibility. The analogy in the *historiola* is primarily interpreted based on Ernesto De Martino's concept of «de-historification of the negative», where ritual actions extrapolate the negative element that caused the ritual performance from the contingency of the present (i.e., historical time) by placing it in mythical time. The author also analyzes the *similia similibus* formula to argue that its composition allows for significant freedom as long as there is a unity of engagement with the present crisis. Time in *historiolae* is interpreted, following Bronisław Malinowski, as bidirectional, i.e., going both from the *illud tempus* («mythical time») to the *hoc tempus* («present time»), and vice versa. Regarding the *historiola* and performativity, the author asks what is the real power given to narrative in *historiolae*, and concludes that it is given by society, thus aligning with Pierre Bourdieu's ideas. In the final paragraph, the author states that many issues about the *historiola* remain unsolved, such as its interpretation according to linguistic acts (i.e., whether it is an illocutionary or perlocutionary act) and the exact correspondence between language and myth.

The second part of the book provides an overview of the history of Assyriological studies regarding the *historiola*, and subsequently categorizes Mesopotamian *historiolae* into narrative and dialogic forms. In the first category (§ III.1), seven *historiolae* from different time periods, languages, and ritual contexts are analyzed. They have been organized based on their thematic content, namely rituals involving the worm, the *merḫu* («stye»), and building

rituals. Narrative *historiolae* are categorized into those that present ritual cosmogonies and those that present *ad hoc* constructions. Ritual cosmogonies are questioned regarding their potential reference to «external macro-myths», leading to the conclusion that they can neither be considered completely autonomous nor fully adherent to a «macro-mythical canon» (p. 143). After highlighting the «compositional malleability» of such cosmogonies, the author addresses why they frequently appear in Mesopotamian *historiolae*, with the answer once again found in the connection between *illud* and *hoc tempus*. Turning to *ad hoc* constructions, the inquiry arises as to how they can function, given their less explicit «macro-myth» connection. Answers are provided mainly through a legitimization rooted in the social authority of the ritualist and the tradition. The efficacy of dialogic *historiolae* (§ III.2) is attributed to the authority of an elder and wise deity, who instructs the ritualist. Finally (§ III.3), the author investigates if the *historiola* was solely written or also performed, ultimately concluding that the two categories are (at least from the point of view of the ritualist) not distinctly separate.

The third part contains a single chapter, entitled «The *historiola* in the light of Mesopotamia» (§ IV), where the first conclusions about the scope and legitimization of *historiolae* are drawn. The book argues that *historiolae* confer strength and power to the ritual act, defining them as narrative acts on the horizontal level (i.e., between human actors) and as extra-human communicative acts on the vertical level (i.e., between humans and extra-humans). The final conclusions are particularly drawn from this last part of the book.

The book serves as a useful tool for Assyriologists, particularly those who lack a strong theoretical background in the subject matter. It also proves beneficial for anthropologists and historians of religions who may not be familiar with Mesopotamian sources, although the first part might seem a little redundant to

those already well-versed in the topic. The history of Assyriology is enjoyable even for non-specialists, although some excessively long quotations occasionally weigh down the overall reading experience. Despite these minor drawbacks, bridging two different fields of study is always a difficult challenge, but one that the author embraces.

The book posits a general definition of *historiolae* as fundamental for ritual efficacy and legitimization, challenging the notion that they are mere literary embellishments, as is often stated in literature. However, this literature sometimes appears outdated, given that many scholars have already re-evaluated the significance of *historiolae* for ritual efficacy. Some of the questions the author claims are unresolved are discussed in other current literature. One of the most prominent scholars in this regard is David Frankfurter, who receives proper attention throughout the book. The author's main critique of Frankfurter centers on his general lack of precision, particularly concerning the usage of the term « myth ». However, this issue may be resolved by providing further clarifications depending on the context in which the term is used, without necessarily coining a new definition for « myth », which is inherently a general term. The newly proposed definition, « mythical capital », which is extensively discussed (pp. 254-56), draws inspiration from Bourdieu's concept of « cultural

capital » to emphasize myth as a concrete and bounded cognitive resource that, like capital, « does things ». However, it remains unclear how this particular new definition distinctly adds to the « narrative that does things » (as coined by Frankfurter), a construct similarly characterized as a « bounded cognitive resource ». Furthermore, one might question whether the reference to Bourdieu is suitable for the present purpose, as other authors adequately discussed in the book may have provided more appropriate and poignant support for this analysis.

Chapter III could have benefited from recent studies conducted by the research group of the Collegium Mythologicum in Göttingen, who also discussed *historiolae*, cf. Gösta Gabriel *et al.*, eds., *Was vom Himmel kommt. Stoffanalytische Zugänge zu antiken Mythen aus Mesopotamien, Ägypten, Griechenland und Rom*, MythoS 4, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2021.

Overall the book addresses a significant topic aiming to bridge two different fields of studies: Assyriology and history of religion, which is a challenging and praiseworthy effort. Moreover, the book will undoubtedly prove valuable for further studies on incantation literature in Assyriology.

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ALEXANDRA DARDENAY ET LAURENT BRICAULT éd.s., *Gods in the House: Anthropology of Roman Housing – II*, Turnhout, Brepols (« Antiquité et sciences humaines », 9), 2023, 367 pages. ISBN: 978-2-503-60169-4.

Cet ouvrage collectif, comportant une introduction (en anglais) et onze articles (six en anglais et cinq en français) de spécialistes internationaux en histoire ancienne, archéologie et histoire de l'art, est le second volume de la série *Anthropology of Roman Housing*, centrée sur l'histoire sociale de la maison romaine, dont le premier volume, sous la di-

rection d'Alexandra Dardenay et de Nicolas Aubry, est paru chez le même éditeur en 2020. L'ouvrage vise à approfondir nos connaissances sur la religion domestique dans le monde romain, une problématique qui a été largement négligée dans l'historiographie du dernier demi-siècle et qui, lorsqu'elle a été abordée, a été principalement analysée