Bryn Mawr Classical Review

BMCR 2022.10.44

Bassir Amiri, *Migrations et mobilité religieuse: espaces, contacts, dynamiques et interférences. Institut des sciences et techniques de l'Antiquité, 1505*. Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2020. Pp. 307. ISBN 9782848678344 €25,00.

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[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

This collection of papers emerges out of a conference addressing religious migrations and mobilities, which seeks to expose the multiplicity of religious transfers and exchanges, and highlight them as being in circulation, rather than one-directional. Following Amiri's introductory chapter of core aims is a series of case studies, mainly drawn from the Mediterranean during the Roman Imperial period. These consider transformations in cult practice in terms of rupture or continuity, especially where new communities are constituted, as for example through colonisation. There is a determination to understand how cults and rituals transform as they circulate in Imperial Space, moving away from models of diffusion and conversion, and towards a dialogical approach that rather investigates cults in contact and through the lens of interculturality. Poulle's concluding remarks pick up these themes at the end of the volume summarising how they are addressed by individual studies.

Among the ambitions aspired to by the editor is a critical investigation of models of cult practice, as for example Price's proposal to distinguish between ethnic/ancestral cults and those which may be considered elective, such as Mithras (p.12-13). How well do such models stand up to scrutiny, when examined through the lens of mobility as presented through this collection of cases? What do they tell us about permeability of systems, confrontation, cohabitation, and the notion of 'origins' of cult, or deities that are emplaced? The volume is one starting point, providing examples that help to address such questions, including how stories of the divine are told in different mobile contexts, as for example in displacement or occupation. Who are the agents of change? How does the balance of power affect the way cult is shaped and positioned as more, or less, foreign? The papers that follow provide thought-provoking examples for addressing these questions rather than investigating them in-depth or drawing out wider patterns of the way religious practice intertwines with other forms of cultural mobility and transformation.

The first part of the volume, on de/constructing religious mobilities opens with a chapter by Praet who uses Mithraism to layout the historiography of the so-called spread of Oriental religions. For ways of understanding transformations in cult practice, he focuses on the role of Cumont's beliefs about cultural superiority of ideas (and their diffusion) and on Frank's racial theories (focusing on the spread of people as migrants). However, as Praet makes clear, he is not considering how Mithraism actually spread, which a few of the other chapters address more directly. Next in this section is Parmentier and Attali's unpicking of the puzzling reference in Persius's *Satires* to *Dies Herodis* a holiday practiced by the Jewish people of Rome in the 1st century AD. Their discussion presents various possibilities how to understand what it was: a general reference to a Jewish festival, the Sabbath, Hannukah, a celebration of Herodian's Birthday? Through outlining hypotheses, they touch on the relationship between sites of 'origin' and diaspora, and on how cult is used as a connection to a real or imagined home. In terms of placedness of cult; it would have been useful to have this in dialogue with the last chapter on Eleusis, which includes a different kind of placedness.

Moving on from people and cult practices on the move Jaccottet focuses on Dionysos as a mobile deity——introduced characteristically as a 'native foreigner', which

appears essential to his cult. The study includes Roman imperial inscriptions by associations of Asianoi——cult followers, who are also characterised as foreign. It encourages reflections on how a deity who is part of the Mediterranean pantheon from earliest days is perpetually presented as a stranger with strange rights. It would have been useful to connect these observations with those in the other chapters, for a deeper reflection on the need to make a cult appear foreign and exotic, tying it into studies on the subject, not least those of Scheid.[1] Continuing a focus on mobile deities, Bricault takes the case of Serapis and the legend of the god's statue being stolen from Sinope. He showcases the way such stories allow for their opportunistic use, as done in the founding of the colony of Sinope, which claims the story of Serapis and draws on the Imperial interest in it—especially by the Flavians. This is presented as key in the spread of the cult in the Roman imperial period and the re/invention of traditions in connections with it. Importantly, it also links such practice with the interest of colonial elites in promoting their position and association with the emperor—a subject also considered by Frija.

Opening Part Two of the volume, Bertrand continues with the theme of deity strangers, focusing on Asclepius's presence in Italy. He exposes the way the colonial context of Antium may have been a stepping-stone for the eventual coming of the cult to Rome in the 3rd century BC. A linking to some of the other chapters confronting colonial contexts and also circulation of Eastern cults and their agents (as those of Bricault and Fontana) would have allowed for some interesting dialogue here. Agents of cult practice, the Haruspices, are the focus of Berthelet's contribution. These specialists in reading divine signs, technically Etruscan, provided services for Rome and its officials. The paper raises issues about their different statuses and considers their integration into the Roman elite society. It implicitly raises the question of what is an 'outsider' and of the importance of 'foreign knowledge' from elsewhere, which would have been interesting to explore further in connection with other volume authors, as well as investigating the way it is artificially maintained as coming from elsewhere.[2]

An epigraphic puzzle, attesting to the worship of Eastern deities in Italy, is investigated by Fontana, who examines the background of a Republican inscription to *Attis Papas* at Aquileia, and the dedicant Theudas, possibly a merchant. The evidence suggests links

to Asia Minor and more specifically Phrygia, attesting to circulation of people and ideas across the Adriatic, encompassing Italy, Illyria, Greece, and Asia Minor. What would have aided this interesting case study is a wider historic context that situated these connectivities in overall relations between Italy and Asia Minor at the time, and the evidence of numerous Italians living there—many of whom would have suffered in the massacre at the hands of Mithridates.[3] Continuing a focus on agents of cult mobility, Van Haeperen's study focuses on the religious habits of customs-personnel, posted in the Roman provinces along the Danube. In particular she is interested in the presence of Mithras cult, and she explores the role of individuals (including slaves) as knowledge holders and culture bearers through a consideration of personal acts of worship, thus making an interesting counter to state and colonial initiatives within the Imperial space. A very different kind of agent is explored in Belayche's chapter, which compares two moments of conveyance of the god Sol to Rome, by Elagabalus and by Aurelian. The primary interest is not the foreignness of the deity and associated practices, but the different ways these Imperial endeavours are presented in such key sources as the *Historia Augusta*. Detailing the diverse ways the god was incorporated by each emperor into Rome, Belayche shows how Elagabalus was held in contempt for his actions, which appear to have put his god above the Roman pantheon, while Aurelian was instead praised for having used the god to glorify it.

Part 3 continues the theme of how cult moves into and through colonial and imperial spaces, beginning with Bianco's chapter, which rather explores such mobility in a space that may be an outlier. It focuses on the presence of Phoenician *Theoi Patrioi* inscriptions in Delos and on the intended meanings of these Phoenician texts in a Greek context. While the study is premised on Delos being representative of Greece more broadly, it is worth asking whether it is rather a site that occupies an in-between or liminal space, in its position as a free port. Hence, it has a particular role in hosting numerous foreign cults (almost like Guilds), including the Italian *Lares Compitales*.[4] Returning to the Roman Imperial context, Frija's chapter considers the adoption of Jupiter Capitolinus in Asia Minor, and particularly in relation to Zeus Kapetolios. A key interest is what such endeavours provided for local communities and their elites: guaranteeing treaties and establishing civic privilege as members of the Roman Empire, alongside showing respect for—and hence hopefully favour of—the Roman emperor.

The use of cult as a way to appeal to Roman imperial interests could have also brought in discourse on the better known distribution of Augustan-era monuments, temples, and the *Res Gestae* across Asia Minor. These raise the issue also of local competition in seeking out such imperial favour and of the way cult was operationalised, along with other cultural tools, to such ends.[5]

Returning to the Italian colonial context, Lacam's chapter explores the forces behind cult resurgence or continuities of practice, through a focus on Lucus Pisaurum. His particular interest is on the role of the settlers in relation to the healing deities there and on the modes of Roman influence. The ways in which this scenario overlaps with, or differs from, the other colonial contexts is not directly considered here, but it would benefit from cross-referencing with other chapters in the volume.

Massa's chapter on the mystery cult at Eleusis—the final study of the volume—most directly addresses diverse forms of religious mobilities: the cult, the worshippers and religious models. It provides rich ground for exploration of the way cult forms a cultural arena for multiple intersections and brings in the question of placedness. Concerning Eleusis the question (especially for the Imperial period) was: could the mystery cult be practiced elsewhere? While it appears immobile, Massa shows how the model of mystery cults spread across the Empire, as in the ceremonies of Demeter and Persephone. It addresses the key volume themes of circulation of cult practice and the mobility of deities, innovatively, through a focus on a seemingly unmoving cult.

The case studies in the volume are in many ways works in progress, which enrich the exploration of the key themes outlined by Amiri. Some tighter editing was needed for certain contributions, especially those with extensive quotations, which read more as a dossier of relevant sources, rather than a coherent argument. While Poulle's conclusion tries to group ideas into themes, a dialogical approach across the chapters, even just addressing common themes set out in the introduction, would have allowed for a richer discourse across the volume. It would be great to see how patterns emerge concerning the intersection of mobile people, ideas, and cult practices, once separate case studies are put into dialogue with each other. What the volume succeeds in is demonstrating the multi-directionality of exchange in the movement of cult practice, with multiple agents

taking part in the complex interactions, which forge (and re-forge) the gods and their rites for new times and in new places.

Authors and Titles

“Sur les épaules” des empereurs : deux dieux Sol introduits à Rome par Élagabal et Aurélien, Nicole Belayche

Partie III—L’implantation des cultes et des divinités : confrontations, croisements et cohabitations ?

Les theoi patrioi des Phéniciens en pays grec, Maria Bianco

Un dieu romain adopté par des Grecs : les cultes de Zeus Kapetolios dans les cités d’Asie, Gabrielle Frija

Le “lucus” de Pisaurum : un lieu de culte sous influences ? Cohabitations et interférences cultuelles dans l’ager Gallicus à l’époque républicaine, Jean-Claude Lacam

Éleusis-Rome aller/retour. Mobilités religieuses autour des mystères éleusiniens à l’époque impériale, Francesco Massa

Conclusions, Bruno Poulle

Notes

[1] For example the work of Scheid on the Greek rites: Scheid, J. 2005. ‘Un Élément original de l’identité romaine: les cultes selon le rite grec’, *Métis* 3: 25-34.

[2] A subject discussed for example in relation to Ceres: Isayev, E. 2011. ‘Just the right amount of priestly foreignness: Roman citizenship for the Greek priestess of Ceres.’ In F. Santangelo & J.H. Richardson (eds), *Priests and State in the Roman World*. Stuttgart: 373-390.

[3] Appian *The Mithridatic Wars* 22–4.

[4] The Delian college of Competaliastai is one example, which oversaw the Italian cult of the *Lares Compitales* from the early second century BCE: Hasenohr, C. 2003. ‘Les Compitalia à Délos.’ *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 127:167–249.

[5] See for example Mazzini, L. 2021. Mazzini, L. (2020). ‘“Triggered identity”: The use of Macedonian ethnic by Blaundos in confrontation with the Roman Empire.’ In A. Irvin (ed.), *Community and Identity at the Edges of the Classical World.* Wiley Blackwell (NJ): 29-46.