

CADMO

REVISTA DE HISTÓRIA ANTIGA
JOURNAL FOR ANCIENT HISTORY

26



CENTRO DE HISTÓRIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
2017

la forman el capítulo de Emily Wilson, “Trends in Greek Literature in the Academy” (cap. 32), centrado en la situación actual de la literatura griega y los estudios clásicos especialmente, aunque no solo, en el mundo académico norteamericano, y Edith Hall, “Reception of Ancient Greek Literature and Western Identity” (cap. 33), que analiza el impacto de esa tradición al margen de la academia.

El *Companion to Greek Literature* editado por Blackwell es un manual de consulta imprescindible para cualquier estudioso interesado en la literatura griega. Como se señala en la introducción, no estamos ante una “Historia de la Literatura”, por lo que habrá datos concretos que no aparezcan y para los que los manuales tradicionales sigan siendo útiles y recomendables, sino ante un sugerente y sólido compañero con el que transitar nuevos caminos y contemplar los textos antiguos desde nuevas perspectivas.

Marta González González

Universidad de Málaga

JAN N. BREMMER (2014), *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*, Münchner Vorlesungen zu Antiken Welten – Herausgegeben vom Münchner Zentrum für Antike Welten (MZAW). Berlin, Walter De Gruyter, 256 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-029929-8 (Hardcover: €64.95; Open Access).

When one analyses the peculiarities of the Greek and Roman religious *phenomena*, it is almost impossible not to take in account the aspect of *initiation* and *mystery*. Jan N. Bremmer, since the very beginning of his work, makes clear the purpose of his study: to delineate the importance and the diffusion of the mysteries, especially for those cults in which the initiatory element is preponderant and, from a diachronic point of view, characterizes the impact the Greek religion had on the Roman empire, until the advent and the rise of Christianity.

The A. makes the reader feel like an adept participating in an initiatory ritual. Through a deductive method of proceeding, Bremmer first categorizes in the Preface the etymology of the word “mystery”, its characterization in the Greek and Roman worlds and a synthetic but exhaustive history of scholarship from the beginning of the studies on the topic (early XVIIth century, with the Eleusinian Mysteries and the debate led by Huguenot Isaac Casaubon) until the explosion of the study trend. With particular regard to the Eastern cults, the studies on the matter take a decisive step at the beginning of the XXth century, with the publication of *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* by Franz Cumont, arriving at one of the most important works on the topic in the modern era, Burkert’s *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987). After this general overview, the A. focuses his attention on the specific characteristics of the main mystery religions.

In Chapter I, a “thin description” of the initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries serves the purpose of delineating the development of this cult all throughout Antiquity. He describes the different steps necessary to become an adept, including preparation, qualifications and a digression on the three stages of the initiation (*myēsis*, *epopteia*, aftermath). The author collects Greek and Roman *loci*, reporting ancient *formulae* and rituals performed during the initiation, fees and obligations of the participants, dances and expectations, social context and afterlife.

Once analyzed the most known mysteries in Greece, Bremmer, in Chapter II, moves his focus

to the second most important, which are found in the island of Samothrace. With basis on the literary and archaeological evidence, the A. first makes a comparison with the Eleusinian Mysteries, then shows the characteristics of the cult, the recurrent presence of a divine triad (one female and two males) and the presence of the “enigmatic gods” called Kabeiroi. He tracks the Greek stories connected to the cult of the deities and their likely presence in the mysteries of Samothrace, the evidences connected to the Imbrian Mysteries, where the gods appear, and the study of the myths related to it, which leads to a comparison with the presence of the same worship also in Lemnos and Thebes. The last part is dedicated to the presence of the Korybantes and their role in public and private cults, especially in the islands of Rhodes and Kos and their diffusion to Ionia, Crete and Athens in the later fifth century BC. Bremmer gives a detailed explanation of the rituals and the sacrificial rites connected to the cult, which eventually becomes solely private, unlike in Samothrace, Lemnos and Pergamon, where the mysteries are part of the religion of State.

In the third chapter the origin and the development of the Orphism and Orphic-Bacchic Mysteries are deeply studied, first through the analysis of the figure of Orpheus, then by focusing on the evidence related to the Orphism in strict sense. Considering the Orphic poems (one of the oldest appears interesting, mentioning the Orphic *katabasis*, which Eduard Norden uses for the basis of Aeneid VI) and the Orphic *Theogony*, of which it is considered a remarkable example the Derveni Papyrus, exalting the pre-eminence of the role of Zeus (likely in contrast with the homonym Hesiod's opera). It is also taken into consideration the Orphic *lifestyle*, the purity and vegetarianism, and the Orphic eschatology. The last section is dedicated to the peculiarities of the Orphic-Bacchic Mysteries, their origins and the study of the archaeological evidence - in this specific case, plaques - which show an evident connection between Orpheus and Dionysus and provide hints of possible performed rites and pronounced formulas during the ritual. There is also a mention here of musical instruments and ritual objects used during the performance.

Chapter IV represents a journey from Greece to the Roman Empire. Through the account of Pausanias, the presence of the mysteries in Arcadia is discussed, in particular in Lycosura, where he visited Despoina's sanctuary, in Andania (Messenia) and Hecate's on Aegina. The second part of the chapter is entirely dedicated to the spreading of mysteries in the Roman Empire, starting with the Dionysiac Mysteries, in the words of the A. “the most complicated Mysteries”, and analyzing their characteristics and impact on the Roman society and religious life.

Chapter V deals with the study of the mysteries of Isis and Mithra, insisting on the peculiar elements of both and their development (with changes of features) through Late Antiquity. This discussion leads to the role, expressed in the last chapter of the book, of the mysteries' influence on Christianity, with a focus on the scholarship of the XXth century, the evidence of pagan mysteries and the subsequent Christian reaction. The A. asks the reader whether the mysteries affected Early Christianity and he appears to be cautious as to acknowledge a direct influence of Christianity. It is necessary to consider, especially during Late Antiquity, a firm religious syncretism, where the mysteries were considered quite “normal”, but at the same time were slowly disappearing, also because of the radicalism of the last emperors. Considering, unlike Franz Cumont, their Graeco-Roman, rather than Oriental, origins some of the mysteries' features eventually got incorporated into the new religious system.

At the end, two Appendixes focus on two specific cases of mysteries in Antiquity: the first

one witnesses the presence of the cult of Demeter and Eleusis in Megara, with a convergence on the presence of temples of Demeter, the description of the festival *Thesmophoria* and finally the presence of the cult of Demeter Malophoros, not only in Megara, but also in Selinus and Selinuntum. The last appendix provides us with a description of Virgil's Underworld in Aeneid VI, divided in six parts (268–416; 417–547; 548–627; 628–636; 637–678; 679–887), through the study of the concept of afterlife found in the Orphic texts, in Pindar and Plato and also tracing back to Hellenistic-Jewish sources, as Alexander Polyhistor.

Mysteries represent a fundamental part of the Graeco-Roman tradition; they help us to better understand the world of Antiquity and the evolution of thought to this day. Fortunately, literary and archaeological evidences make them, in the contemporary era, a little less “mysterious”. For those who deal with this topic as novices, reading this book could be a systematic and at the same time agile approach to this complex and intriguing matter.

Marco Alampi

Universidade de Lisboa

University of Praha

JORGE DESERTO & SUSANA DA HORA MARQUES PEREIRA, introdução, tradução e notas (2016), *Estrabão. Geografia Livro III*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 127 pp. ISBN 978-989-26-1225-6 (€21.20)

Uma vez mais, a Imprensa e o Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra (CECH), através da Série Diáita: Scripta & Realia – Estudos Monográficos, surpreenderam o público e, em particular, a comunidade académica, com a publicação em Novembro de 2016, do Livro III da *Geografia* de Estrabão.

Composta por dezassete livros, a *Geografia* colige os conhecimentos geográficos do mundo Greco-Romano do primeiro século da nossa era e o Livro III, inteiramente consagrado à Península Ibérica, é de particular importância para historiadores e arqueólogos que estudam a História Antiga peninsular. Numa narrativa que evoca as *Histórias* de Heródoto, Estrabão, que nunca visitou este recanto do Império, mas consultou as obras de autores como Éforo, Piteas de Massília, Eratóstenes, Heródoto, Timóstenes, Asclepiades, Políbio, Artemidoro ou Possidónio, sem esquecer a exegese por si feita às obras de Homero, Estesícoro, Anacreonte, Píndaro ou Ferécides, que localizaram no Extremo Ocidente alguns mitos gregos, apresenta uma preciosa e ampla descrição geográfica e histórica do mundo peninsular do seu tempo e de séculos anteriores. As informações de teor geográfico e cartográfico (distâncias, fronteiras naturais, rios, montanhas, vias de comunicação) foram complementadas com a etnografia (costumes, práticas religiosas e alimentares) e economia (recursos naturais e exportações para Roma) dos diferentes povos locais que são nomeados e identificados. Estrabão, que é também uma fonte importante para o estudo da colonização fenícia e grega na Península, ao citar as fundações que a tradição atribuía a cada povo, deixou a sua narrativa desaguar na chegada das legiões de Roma, cujo papel pacificador e civilizador não se cansou de notar ao longo