ROMAN GODS IN GREEK

BUSZARD (B.) *Greek Translations of Roman Gods*. Pp. xii + 324. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023. Cased, £100, €109.95, US $126.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-107179-4.
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Since the mid-nineteenth century scholars have been interested in Greek translations of Latin words and Roman customs, but the huge amount of sources has prevented any systematic study so far. Almost two centuries of scholarship and new tools allowed B. to take up the challenge with the project on 'Greek Translations from Latin' (GRETL). A – still incomplete – database of Latin words and their Greek translations is available online (http://buszard.cnu.edu), and this volume on Roman gods is the first of a series of monographs delving deeper into specific topics.

In the introduction B. starts with a brief discussion on the challenges of translation. A short historiography of the study of Greek translations of Latin words is followed by a presentation of the GRETL project and the volume. B. then shows that such translations emerged in evolving contexts, from the first commercial contacts between Greeks and Romans to the imperial period, when the Greeks were fully integrated into the Roman Empire. The main Greek authors used as sources in the book (Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Plutarch, Appian and Cassius Dio) are presented, with a discussion of the objectives of their work and biographical elements that allow B. to estimate their knowledge of Latin. While some of them spent most of their life in Rome, others are outsiders, and their translations do not always match the translations adopted by Latin authors for their own gods. Throughout the book B. stresses that such translations are not a one-way process, but a dialogue between Greeks and Romans.

The bulk of the book (pp. 18–266) consists of a catalogue of Roman gods, with entries corresponding to theonyms and, in the case of Fortuna, Iuno, Iuppiter and Venus, to epithets. For each entry B. discusses the name used by Greek authors and the identification of the corresponding Roman deity, which in some cases (e.g. for Τύχη Ἀποτρόπαιος) is uncertain. B. analyses the choice of a specific Greek equivalent or of a translated name for gods without an obvious equivalent. For instance, the common noun *virtus* can be translated both as ἀρετή and ἀνδρεία, two words with different connotations, and the fact that the goddess Virtus is always called Ἀρετή provides insights into her perception by the Greeks.

While some equivalences between Roman and Greek gods are standard, Greek authors occasionally have to provide their own translations. Fortuna Respiciens ('Looking back') is called Ἐπιστρεφομένη ('Turning herself back') by Plutarch, an imperfect translation, which obliterates the visual aspect of the Latin epithet. Cassius Dio, in contrast, considers the name difficult for the Greeks to express and does not attempt to translate it. A translation does not necessarily need to be literal. Plutarch, for example, mentions the goddess that the Romans call Ἀγαθή ('Good', i.e. Bona Dea) and the Greek Γυναικεία, 'the women's goddess', an allusion to festivals from which men are excluded. Other translations can be explained by a misunderstanding of the name of the deity. In Latin references to Fors Fortuna Greek authors have seemingly understood Fortis as the genitive of the adjective *fortis* ('strong') and not of the noun *fors* ('chance'). Sometimes the choice of a translation depends on the rhetorical context. This explains how Plutarch chooses between two possible translations, Γνώμη and Εὐβουλία, for the goddess Mens and why, in different works, he either accepts or questions the standard equivalence between Mater Matuta and Leukothea.

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B. further discusses the different etymologies proposed by Greek authors for Roman gods such as Liber. But the study is not limited to divine names. He also analyses the context in which Roman gods and cults are mentioned. In fact, translation is understood in a very broad way and 'incorporat[es] the varying attitudes and explications of different Greek authors, with special attention paid to the ways in which Greek writers assimilated and differentiated various aspects of Greek and Roman cultures for their audience' (p. 4).

In the introduction (p. 5) B. lists inscriptions among his main sources. However, his use of epigraphy is uneven. For instance, he alludes to but does not discuss the earliest source attesting the translation of Fortuna Primigenia as Πρωτογένεια, which is an inscription. There is no entry on the *Di Manes*, who are named Θεοὶ Καταχθόνιοι in numerous Greek and bilingual funerary inscriptions from Rome (L. Pérez Yarza and C. Bonnet, 'Divine Names and Bilingualism in Rome: Religious Dynamics in Multilingual Spaces', in: A. Palamidis and C. Bonnet [edd.], *What's in a Divine Name?* [2024], pp. 765–9). S. Paul's article on the names of Roman gods in Greek inscriptions is absent from the bibliography ('Nommer les dieux romains en Grèce. Épiclèses grecques et latines en interaction dans la pratique dédicatoire', in: C. Bonnet et al. [edd.], *Dieux des Grecs – Dieux des Romains* [2016], pp. 61–77). In fact, the two-page-long conclusion, which discusses the contexts in which Roman gods and cults are cited in the works of various authors, makes it clear that B.'s primary interest is Greek historiography.

In contrast, for a historian of religion like me, it is striking that religion is only addressed indirectly in the introduction and conclusion. At the beginning of the catalogue a single sentence is devoted to *interpretatio* (p. 18), and important bibliographical references on this notion are missing (in particular M. Bettini, '*Interpretatio Romana*: Category or Conjecture?', in: *Dieux des Grecs – Dieux des Romains*, pp. 17–35; R. Parker, *Greek Gods Abroad* [2017]). The catalogue is divided into 'syncretized' and 'unsyncretized' gods, that is gods who have or lack a standard Greek equivalent; however, the problematic concept of syncretism is never addressed (B. could not have known C. Bonnet's study, 'Pour en finir avec le syncrétisme', *La Parola del passato* 77 [2022], 171–91, but previous bibliography is also missing). Under 'syncretized gods' B. includes both gods such as Iuppiter, whose Greek equivalent is Zeus, and Greek gods adopted by the Romans such as Apollo and Aesculapius. One also wonders why Pax, whose Greek equivalent is always Εἰρήνη, is considered an unsyncretised goddess. The division between syncretised and unsyncretised gods is not really helpful, especially considering the absence of a concluding discussion on the different strategies used to translate Roman gods depending on their classification.

Moreover, I noticed some errors. For instance, B. writes that Athena, unlike Minerva, is not a healing deity and is never associated with Ares (pp. 115–16). But there is a cult of Athena Hygieia ('Health') on the Athenian Acropolis, and Athena Areia is associated with Ares in Acharnai (e.g. *IG* II^3.1, 447, l. 35; *SEG* 21, 519, l. 3–4). Sacred prostitution is considered a historical fact (p. 136), without any allusion to the rich discussion in recent scholarship (e.g. E. Anagnostou-Laoutides, M.B. Charles, 'Herodotus on Sacred Marriage and Sacred Prostitution', *Kernos* 31 [2018], 9–37). In Strabo's narrative about Mater Magna's arrival in Rome (pp. 104–5) ἀφίδρυμα is translated as 'image', but studies have shown that the word has a different meaning in such a context (e.g. I. Malkin, 'What is an *Aphidruma*?', *Classical Antiquity* 10 [1991], 77–96). Relevant scholarly work on specific religious topics is ignored, and dictionaries such as *Brill's New Pauly* constitute an important part of the bibliography.

That being said, the volume is a welcome addition to scholarship about the translation of foreign gods in antiquity. B.'s familiarity with Greek historians allows him to discuss very precisely the emergence of certain translations, something that epigraphical sources

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rarely allow us to do. However, I think that future GRETL monographs (such as the volume on cult personnel announced on p. 144) should be written in collaboration with specialists of the topics under study – if funding allows.

Toulouse ALAYA PALAMIDIS
alaya.palamidis@gmail.com

CONVERSIONS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

DESPOTIS (A.), LÖHR (H.) (edd.) *Religious and Philosophical Conversion in the Ancient Mediterranean Traditions*. (Ancient Philosophy & Religion 5.) Pp. xii + 477, figs. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Cased, €149, US$180. ISBN: 978-90-04-50176-8.
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The stubborn problems in the study of conversion resemble those in the study of magic or religion in general: how to define it; what approach to take (lexical, theological, psychological, sociological or cognitive? emic or etic?); whether it constitutes a coherent category across cultures, traditions and eras; whether it is worth retaining.

This collection, the product of a 2018 University of Bonn conference, indicates that some agreement has been reached in the 90 years since A.D. Nock's *Conversion* (1933). The typology and sociological orientation of L. Rambo's *Understanding Religious Conversion* (1993) remain influential, while Nock is cited mainly for criticism. The contributors stress that conversion is a diverse, multi-dimensional, gradual process and converts active participants, even if it is experienced (or remembered) as sudden, passive or externally initiated, and that conversion narratives do not transparently reveal psychology or historical experience but are shaped by and into normative paradigms. Juxtaposing sections on Judaism, philosophy and Christianity presumes that, for all its variety, 'conversion' can be meaningfully discussed across traditions and was debated among them in antiquity.

Fundamental disagreements over definition persist, though, and the editors decline to define 'conversion'. Must it be exclusive? Is it the start, the culmination or the duration of the process? What is most necessary: change of belief, behaviour or belonging? That is, what constitutes 'conversion' and how can we recognise it? The sharpest conflict concerns how expansively to define 'conversion', and especially whether to include repentance and (re)turning (to virtue, correct values, oneself, the community, God, cosmic order). Many contributions focus on precisely that, but in a provocative chapter P.A. Davis dismisses it as not 'conversion *per se*' (p. 248). He cogently dissects the methodological difficulties in looking for 'conversion', an etic concept, in ancient sources. Attempting an emic approach, he argues that in the synoptic gospels, Acts and even the Apostolic Fathers, the words *metanoia*, *epistrophe* and their cognates do not denote 'conversion itself' (p. 261), but 'intrareligious' repentance for sin and a change of behaviour leading to restoration of an impaired relationship. This is a useful redescription, but what is 'conversion itself' and how does it differ? One cannot escape etic definitions. Perhaps the answer is that 'conversion' must cross religious boundaries, repent *beliefs*, not *behaviours*, and create 'new or different devotion' instead of restoring 'former faithfulness' (p. 266). Yet Davis also resists labelling Gentile transition to Christ-belief 'conversion', partly because our sources employ the

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