

Religions in the Graeco-Roman World

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Individuals and Materials in the Greco-Roman Cults of Isis

Agents, Images, and Practices

*Proceedings of the VIth International Conference
of Isis Studies (Erfurt, May 6–8, 2013 – Liège,
September 23–24, 2013)*

VOLUME 1

Edited by

Valentino Gasparini
Richard Veymiers



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Acknowledgments

This book is the culmination of an ambitious idea that was born during the autumn of 2011 in the port city of Boulogne-Sur-Mer, in the setting of the *Fifth International Conference of Isis Studies* at which we have been invited to speak. During the course of this stimulating event, the proceedings of which were published in an important book in this series, *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, the two of us concluded that it was necessary to revisit the agents that peopled these cults from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, by looking at them more closely in their own environment, in order to understand better the diversity of religious communities that are often treated in a quite monolithic way. While Isiac studies experienced an undeniable dynamism from the end of the 20th cent. onwards, they also risked turning into a somewhat limited discipline, trapped between Classical Studies and Egyptology. It was necessary to broaden their horizon, and, to this end, solicit the expertise of a wide range of specialists who were not necessarily familiar with our field of study. A call for papers was issued, quickly leading to responses from roughly forty scholars from very different areas.

A workshop was not sufficient for this level of response, nor was a single colloquium. It was thus by means of a pair of conferences that this initiative finally took form, through the creation of a partnership between two universities with notable traditions for working on ancient polytheism. The first of the two conferences was therefore held on the 6th–8th of May 2013 in the Internationales Begegnungszentrum (IBZ) of the Universität Erfurt, in the context of the work of Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur-und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien, and his Research group “Religious Individualization in Historical Perspective”. Our joint project continued a few months later with a second conference on the 23rd–24th of September, at the Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres of the Université de Liège, under the aegis of the Département des sciences historiques and the Département des sciences de l’Antiquité. This effective Belgo-German collaboration would not have been possible without the determining role played by Jörg Rüpke and Wolfgang Spickermann of Erfurt, and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, Jean Winand and Thomas Morard of Liège, thanks to whom we were able to get financial support from institutions like the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique – FNRS, and the Patrimoine de l’Université de Liège. We would like to very warmly thank them all here.

The stimulating exchanges that marked these eight half-days spent in a collegial and enthusiastic atmosphere promised fertile results, and Laurent

Bricault and Miguel John Versluys have very kindly accepted the participants' rich contributions for inclusion in the *International Conferences of Isis Studies* series, thus paving the way for publication by Brill as part of *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*. Thus began the long process of editorial work on what had become the *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of Isis Studies*, in the context of which we benefitted from the unfailing help and support of Laurent Bricault. We take this opportunity to offer him our profound gratitude. The same applies to Linda Finnigan who checked the texts in English and to all of the authors who showed patience and understanding, always taking into account suggestions made by outside experts and the editors. Finally, we would like to thank the Brill publishing house and editorial board of the *RGRW* series, for generously agreeing to publish our collective work, and especially Miguel John Versluys and Frederick Naerebout, who guided us through all of the steps leading to the creation of these two "green books".

Two "green books" which Professor Michel Malaise and Professor Robert Turcan would have been happy and proud to have in their hands. The former left us at Ossogne on 25 January 2016 and the latter at Craponne on 16 January 2018. They had honored us with their presence during the meeting in Liège and their contribution can be found in the following pages. On the death of Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, Michel Malaise had written his widow: "Un homme comme lui ne meurt jamais vraiment; il reste un exemple et ses travaux seront toujours lus avec le plus grand intérêt" (letter of Sept. 24th, 1985). This sentence applies in equal measure to Michel Malaise and Robert Turcan. This book is dedicated to the memory of these two towering figures in the study of ancient religion.

Richard Veymiers & Valentino Gasparini