

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In 1995, Richard Hamilton concluded an appreciative review of the first edition (1994) with the words; ‘Let us hope B(remmer) is willing to give us an update in a decade’ (*BMCR* 1995.06.02). Alas, time went too fast to fulfil this wish, as the reprint (1999) only contained a few pages with addenda, but it gives me much pleasure that I am able to release a second edition after a quarter of a century. I had been updating the notes to some extent in the German (1996), Italian (2002), Dutch (2004), Spanish (2006), and French (2012) translations, but for the second edition I have wholly revised the notes and adapted the main text to take stock of new insights regarding the problems treated in the first edition, and also to add reflections on recent developments in the field, such as the discussions about the notion of belief, the nature and authority of *polis* religion, and the importance of mythology.

The first edition profited from the input of many colleagues. It is therefore sad to see that quite a few important scholars of Greek religion have passed away in the intervening years.¹ Fortunately, we now have several collections of their articles at our disposal, which will make research into the study of Greek religion much easier than it used to be.² It also means, however, that we are in a kind of transitional stage in which interests have been shifting away from myth and ritual to cognitive approaches and to hitherto somewhat neglected aspects, such as magic, theology, local religion, or the place of animals in Greek religion.

I have been very fortunate that I could discuss the whole of the present edition with my friends Bob Fowler and Julia Kindt, who alerted me to oversights, obscure formulations, and new topics, while several individual chapters were commented upon by Anja Klöckner, Norbert Oettinger, and Katja Sporn. I am most grateful for the care and attention they have all given to my text, as well as to Phil Horky and John Taylor for soliciting the new edition and the latter also for reading my final draft so carefully. Finally, Hester Higton’s meticulous

¹ I remember with gratitude Walter Burkert (1931–2015), Marcel Detienne (1935–2019), Albert Henrichs (1942–2017), Michael Jameson (1924–2004), Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1945–2007), Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1930–2006), and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1914–2007).

² See Vernant 2007; Burkert 2001–11; Jameson 2014; Henrichs 2019.

copy-editing greatly improved my text. I do not expect to complete a third edition, but I do hope that the present book will long remain a reliable guide to the fascinating world of Greek religion and mythology.

Jan N. Bremmer
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