

RelBib

Bibliography of the Study of Religion

<https://relbib.de>

Dear reader,

This is a self-archived version of the following article:

Authors: Mastrocinque, Attilio / Rüpke, Jörg
Title: "Religious Experience in the Roman World"

Published in: Memory and Religious Experience in the Greco-Roman World
Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag

Year: 2013

Pages: 135 - 136

ISBN: 3-515-10425-9

The article is used with permission of [Steiner-Verlag](#).

Thank you for supporting Green Open Access.

Your RelBib team

EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN



UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE ROMAN WORLD

Attilio Mastrocinque, Università degli Studi di Verona

Jörg Rüpke, Universität Erfurt

Despite the centrality of experience in the thinking about religion since the end of the eighteenth century, “experience” has not been brought to bear on ancient religion outside Judaism and Christianity despite some recent book titles.¹ The very subjectivity of “experience” (*pathos*,² unlike the ancient notion of *experientia*, that is, learning from practising) seems to conflict with the dearth of ancient sources. However, recent analyses of the phenomenon have produced a concept of experience that takes into account the connection between personal experience and communicated meaning, and allows for a historical use of the concept. We quote Matthias Jung, co-fellow at the Max-Weber centre: “Personal, lived experience in its qualitative-emotional dimension remains dumb and has no power to transform behaviour as long as it is not articulated symbolically,” and “[...] any system of convictions and practices, that from the first-person-point of view is no longer seen as expressive for qualitative experience, becomes increasingly obsolete.”³ ‘Experience’ could thus stress the observer and user of images, sacred space, and movement towards and in sacred space, that is, pilgrimage.⁴

For the ancient Mediterranean, however, ‘religious experience’ is a term that is not usually associated with the public temples of cities or villages, but rather confined to ‘mystery cults’ or even attributed to ‘oriental origins’. The ensuing chapters go far beyond this. They explore forms of religious experiences located in or stimulated by sanctuaries and architectural space, by traditional cults as well as religious innovations, for a broad range of religious infrastructures and groups.

Given the long tradition of research, the contributions relate to questions of long-distance religious exchange as much as to reflections about the concepts and terminology of the history of religion.

- 1 Bispham, Smith 2000; Cole 2004. “Emotionality” has gained more attention, but need not be related to individuality: Linke 2003, 84.
- 2 During the SBL conference in Boston in 2008, Troels Engberg-Pedersen presented an attempt to define and identify religious experiences in ancient texts by this term.
- 3 Jung 2006, 21; see also Jung 2004 and Schlette, Jung 2005, in particular Jung 2005.
- 4 For the latter see e. g. Petsalis-Diomidis 2005.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bispham, Edward; Smith, Christopher 2000. *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome and Italy: evidence and experience*. Edinburgh.
- Cole, Susan G. 2004. *Landscapes, gender and ritual space: the ancient Greek experience*. Berkeley.
- Jung, Matthias 2004. "Qualitative Erfahrung in Alltag, Kunst und Religion", in: Mattenklott, Gert (ed.) 2004. *Ästhetische Erfahrung im Zeichen der Entgrenzung der Künste. Epistemische, ästhetische und religiöse Erfahrungsformen im Vergleich*. Hamburg. 31–53.
- Jung, Matthias 2005. "'Making us explicit' – Artikulation als Organisationsprinzip von Erfahrung", in: Schlette, Jung 2005, 103–42.
- Jung, Matthias 2006. "Making life explicit – The symbolic pregnance of religious experience", *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, volume 'Ernst Cassirer'. 16–23.
- Linke, Bernhard 2003. "Emotionalität und Status: zur gesellschaftlichen Funktion von supplicationes und lectisternia in der römischen Republik", in: Kneppel, Alfred; Metzler, Dieter (eds.) 2003. *Die emotionale Dimension antiker Religiosität (Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte 37)*. Münster. 65–86.
- Petsalis-Diomidis, Alexia 2005. "The body in space: visual dynamics in Graeco-Roman healing pilgrimage", in: Elsner, Jas; Rutherford, Ian (eds.) 2005. *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: seeing the gods*. Oxford. 183–218.
- Schlette, Magnus; Jung, Matthias 2005. *Anthropologie der Artikulation: begriffliche Grundlagen und transdisziplinäre Perspektiven*. Würzburg.