



The Strangeness of Gods: Historical Perspectives on the Interpretation of Athenian Religion

S. C. Humphreys

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The Strangeness of Gods combines studies of changes in modern interpretations of Greek religion with studies of changes in Athenian ritual. The combination is necessary in order to combat influential stereotypes: that Greek religion consisted of ritual without theological speculation, that ritual is inherently conservative. To re-examine the evidence for Greek rituals and their interpretation is also to re-examine our own preconceptions and prejudices. The argument presented by S. C. Humphreys tries to bring Greek texts closer to the "classic" texts of other civilizations, and religion, as a form of speculative thought, closer to science. Her studies of Athenian rituals put this emphasis on changing interpretations into practice, showing that the Athenians thought about their rites as well as celebrating them.

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