



Kernos

Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion
grecque antique

19 | 2006
Varia

Jörg GEBAUER, Pompe und Thysia. Attische Tieropferdarstellungen auf schwarz- und rotfigurigen Vasen

Gunnel Ekroth



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/kernos/481>

ISSN: 2034-7871

Publisher

Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 January 2006

ISSN: 0776-3824

Electronic reference

Gunnel Ekroth, « Jörg GEBAUER, Pompe und Thysia. Attische Tieropferdarstellungen auf schwarz- und rotfigurigen Vasen », *Kernos* [Online], 19 | 2006, Online since 18 June 2011, connection on 06 May 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/kernos/481>

que. Cette thèse lui semble ne pas tenir compte assez de la signification politique de ce rituel soutenu par la *polis*, rituel qui doit être considéré dans l'ensemble du système athénien : l'envoi de femmes « fragiles » sur les frontières « dangereuses » prouve la confiance de la cité en la sûreté de ses frontières, dont Artémis a elle-même la garde (p. 203). Mais Artémis est exigeante, et ne tolère aucun manquement à la pureté requise des jeunes filles, qui se doivent de rester vierges, au risque sinon, comme le montrent de nombreux mythes, de provoquer la ruine de la cité. La légende de Mélanippe et Comaithô à Patras est citée en exemple. Mais ici, la faute est commune au couple, et les standards de pureté sont exigés des deux sexes, puisque l'oracle de Delphes exige le sacrifice expiatoire, annuel, d'une jeune fille *et* d'un jeune homme... Les manquements peuvent aussi concerner la discipline, comme à Brauron, encore que l'histoire d'Artémis Apanchomené (Pausanias, VIII, 23, 6-7), citée juste après, contredise cette vision, puisque des enfants y commettent une faute, pour laquelle ils sont lapidés (faute qui, à Brauron, avait demandé le sacrifice d'une jeune fille), mais c'est la lapidation des enfants qui irrite Artémis, et non leur désobéissance. La réussite des rituels « dangereux » conforte non seulement le système civique, mais garantit à celui-ci la bonne grâce de la déesse. L'A. passe ensuite en revue, avec tact, toutes les étapes qui conduisent les fillettes vers le mariage, avec à chaque fois une Artémis gardienne difficile et implacable, de l'apparition des menstruations à l'accouchement d'un enfant vivant. Je note un superbe développement sur les vêtements et le tissage dans ce contexte, avec les offrandes de vêtements finis ou inachevés à la déesse ou à Iphigénie, et scrupuleusement conservés et inventoriés par le pouvoir public, symbolisant par là toute l'importance accordée par la cité à la réalisation des rituels féminins et leur but, « a crop of healthy children ».

Nous attendrons le second volume, sur Déméter, pour tester davantage la méthode. Jusque-là, tout en soulignant l'érudition et les nombreux aspects positifs de l'ouvrage, je me permets de rester sur la défensive.

Pierre Bonnechere
(Université de Montréal)

Jörg GEBAUER, *Pompe und Thysia. Attische Tieropferdarstellungen auf schwarz- und rotfigurigen Vasen*, Münster, UGARIT-Verlag, 2002. 1 vol. 17,5 × 24,5 cm, 807 p., 375 fig. (*EIKON. Beiträge zur antiken Bildersprache*, 7). ISBN : 3-934628-30-3.

Any reader familiar with Folkert van Straten's seminal study *Hierà kalá. Images of animal sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (1995) may be surprised to encounter Jörg Gebauer's book published in 2002. Even Gebauer himself admits, in the first sentence of the preface, that yet another study of the representations of Greek animal sacrifice may be overkill. The need for this study is explained as previous work not having considered the evidence sufficient detail.

Gebauer's book is a slightly revised doctoral thesis presented in 1999 at the Wilhelms-Universität in Westphalia. His undertaking is a major one. The material treated consists of around 570 black and red-figure vases, predominantly Attic, described and analysed in detail. In the footnotes, a large number of other vases are brought in as comparison, as well as a more limited selection of literary and epigraphical evidence. Most of the vases of the main corpus are illustrated, though by reproducing illustrations found in other publications instead of using original photographs, which leaves the reader wishing for better quality in some instances.

The book starts with an introduction stating the author's position on theoretical matters, the role of animal sacrifice within Greek religion, the source material and previous research. Gebauer underlines that the vase-paintings are not to be seen as accurate renderings of the ancient reality and that they can only be understood if considered within the total framework of Attic vase-painting. This methodology makes it possible to evaluate the validity of the vases as sources for Greek religion and provides the necessary tools for them to be read. By this approach it can be distinguished which changes in the vase-paintings may relate to changes in the cultic reality and which are rather to be seen as part of the general development of the Attic ceramic iconography, no matter the topic rendered.

Gebauer's main aim is to identify specific groups of scenes within the iconography of Greek animal sacrifice, as well as specific types of figures which were combined to construct schemes that constitute important parts of the vase-paintings. The vases are not to be seen as the results of artists' free creations. The scenes were ambiguous and their contents deliberately imprecise to allow the buyer to project his own interpretations on what was depicted.

The bulk of the book, 450 of the 580 text pages, is occupied by a discussion of the representations of animal sacrifice divided into six subgroups corresponding to the different parts of the ritual: 1) procession (*pompe*), 2) preparatory rituals (*archesthai*), 3) killing, 4) butchering and *hieroskopia*, 5) the burning of the gods' portion and the grilling of the *splanchna*, and 6) the ritual meal. The vases included in each group are presented in a detailed and commented catalogue, each item given a convenient abbreviation: P 1 for the first procession scene, S 1 for the first killing (Schlachtung) scene and so forth.

The procession scenes are most abundant within the sacrificial repertoire (nos. P 1-148). The motif is constructed by different components: the leader, the *kanephoros*, the person escorting the animal victim, the musicians, the assistants carrying equipment, and sometimes other participants as well. In defining the motif of *pompe*, Gebauer argues that the iconography of processions is not clear-cut. It can be mixed with elements from the Dionysiac sphere and, in some cases, it is the events just before the animal is to be killed which are shown rather than the procession. The presence of jumping and running animals are suggested to emphasize the participants' ability to handle the animals, rather than animals' unwillingness to be sacrificed. Another context to be separated from the procession is that of the animal victim within an agonistic setting, where the animal's prime function is that as a prize.

The preparatory rituals at the altar (nos. A 1-23), summarized as *archesthai*, are more rarely shown but has a more consistent iconography than the procession scenes. The altar is always in the centre and the action depicted is usually that of a main protagonist washing his hands (*chernips*), or handling grain or frankincense.

The fact that the killing is hardly ever explicitly depicted on the vases has long been observed by scholars, but Gebauer underlines the difficulties of establishing the iconography of killing, especially at a *thysia* sacrifice, since the scenes relating to this activity are so disparate in construction and appearance (nos. S 1-28). Among the many interesting points made in this section is the fact that a female figure on a red-figure sherd (Sv 19, fig. 154) from Building Z in the Kerameikos (Athens, Kerameikos 5662) is not about to kill a goat, since the woman holds a torch and not a sword. The importance of the killing and the lack of depictions of this activity have both been overemphasized in modern scholarship. The vase-painters were less interested in

showing this part of the ritual and therefore no precise iconography was developed, as was the case with the *pompe* and the *archesthai*.

The scenes showing butchering of the slaughtered animal centre on three themes: entire dead victims, specific parts (mainly back legs) and the meat being divided and threaded onto spits (nos. Z 1-40). Legs being carried around are to be seen as linked to courting and honouring of individuals by gifts of meat rather than as representations of animal sacrifices in progress, although sacrifice was the source of the meat (in an appendix, 51 such scenes are collected, Zv 41-91). Gebauer further points out that no dead animal shows any physical injuries and there is hardly any trace of blood. There is only one representation of a woman in a setting of meat preparation (Z 17, fig. 179; St. Petersburg, Eremitage 4509). He closes this section with a discussion of the homogenous group of scenes showing *bieroskopia* (nos. H 1-22), a motif with brief popularity which he classifies as a sub-category to the departing warrior theme.

The activities at the altar following the killing make up Gebauer's fifth iconographic group (nos. B 1-83). The principal feature is the grilling of the *splanchna*, represented by a figure holding the spits with the innards, to which can be added two other components: the burning of the portion of the gods and the pouring of a libation. The *splanchnoptes* becomes an established figure type and a comparison with similar figures in other scenes shows that his frequently crouching position is to be taken as a sign of activity and not as inferior status, as has often been claimed.

The final category to be considered is the meal following the sacrifice (nos. M 1-48). These representations are less visibly connected with sacrifice, since there are usually no references to ritual activity within the scenes and they more often depict wine drinking than meat eating. Gebauer here opts for a selection of scenes, which include meat and/or knives. The oblong strips seen on the tables in many sympotic scenes are definitely to be taken to be meat and some pieces may even represent back legs. Of prime concern seems to have been to show the quantity of meat, which constituted a means to emphasize the prominence of the person dining. The reclining figure at a table filled with meat is often a divinity or mythic hero, such as Dionysos, Herakles or Achilles. The depiction of meat and knives are not to be taken as accurate renderings of sympotic behaviour but rather as references to the completed sacrifice and the important position occupied by the person dividing the meat and distributing it to others. An interesting subfeature of these scenes is the dog gnawing at an animal hoof under the table.

After establishing the sequence of iconographic themes, Gebauer addresses a number of comprehensive issues all across the evidence. The identification of priests is discussed, underlining that a distinct type of dress is no accurate sign of this function and that the knife, a common indicator of priests on reliefs, on the vase-paintings rather indicates the *mageiros*. A reference to Alexander Mantes' study of the iconography of priests and priestesses could have been included here.⁴ The role and status of the figures escorting the animals, the assistants, the *splanchnoptai* and the musicians are also commented upon. On the question whether women could participate in animal sacrifice Gebauer concludes that, though priestesses definitely are shown, few women appear in sacrificial contexts apart from the *kanephoroi*, and no woman is shown as holding a knife.

⁴ A.G. MANTES, *Προβλήματα της εικονογραφίας των ιερειών και των ιερών στην αρχαία ελληνική τέχνη*, Athens, 1990 (*Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου*, 42).

Gods are present as recipients of animal sacrifices, in the guise of cult statues or as epiphanies, and a small group of divinities are even shown as active at such rituals: Dionysos, Nike, Hermes and Athena. Renderings of Herakles performing sacrifice, as well as being a sacrificial victim, are discussed and there is a separate catalogue of Busiris representations (nos. Bu 1-30). It would have been interesting to have the French studies on this particular motif brought into this discussion.⁵

The equipment for the cult is also outlined, focusing on baskets, spits and knives. There is a detailed discussion of basket types, as well as a separate catalogue including both scenes showing such items being used and a selection of figurines of basket carriers (nos. Kv 1-80). Elements referring to a sanctuary or other holy location where the sacrifice takes place are inventoried but a conclusive coverage is said to be impossible due to the evidence being too extensive and complex. In his treatment of altars, Gebauer questions the scholarly fascination in constructing altar typologies (*Untergliederungsmanie*), though proceeds to make his own typebased presentation of the evidence. There is a good discussion of the distinctions between black- and red-figure altars, as well as of bloodstains, while altars constructed out of fieldstones are shown to be confined to mythical representations most of all.⁶ The occurrence of columns are not to be taken as representations of actual buildings but rather as iconographical framings in the sense of baldachins. Trees, on the other hand, were used to fill out the scene and indicate a rural setting.

In the brief conclusion, Gebauer emphasizes the heterogeneity of the evidence and that the iconography of sacrifice is strongly schematized, just as Attic vase-painting in general, particularly in the second half of the 5th century BC. To approach and interpret the sacrificial iconography within the wider perspective of Attic vases bearing other scenes makes it possible to divine whether what at first may seem as a specific and informative depiction of a religious ritual is, in fact, a construction of elements found also in completely different iconographic contexts. The vases do offer possibilities to investigate individual aspects of the sacrifices, which are not reflected by the written sources, though this calls for an awareness of the iconography working with set types. A bit bleakly Gebauer concludes that the understanding of the practical execution of sacrifices can only be partly increased by using the pictorial evidence from the vases, due to their schematic and idealizing rendering of the ritual reality.

There is a bibliography including the works most frequently used, many others are only found in the footnotes. The first index (very useful) lists the collections and inventory numbers of all vases referred to, both those discussed in detail and those briefly mentioned in the footnotes. The following two indexes cover ancient authors and inscriptions, as well as general terms. The book closes with 375 figures. There are only few misprints, such as wrong references to the figure numbers of catalogue nos. P 5 and P 6 on p. 36 and 37, and *temena* for *temene* on p. 516.

⁵ J.-L. DURAND, F. LISSARRAGUE, "Héros cru ou hôte cuit : histoire quasi cannibale d'Hérakès chez Busiris", in F. LISSARRAGUE, F. THÉLAMON (eds.), *Image et céramique grecque. Actes du colloque de Rouen 25-26 novembre 1982*, Rouen, 1983, p. 153-167, and J.-L. DURAND, F. LISSARRAGUE, "Mourir à l'autel. Remarques sur l'imagerie du « sacrifice humain » dans la céramique attique", *ARG* 1 (1999), p. 83-106.

⁶ For these matters see also G. EKROTH, "Altars on Attic vases: the identification of *bomos* and *eschara*", in Ch. SCHEFFER (ed.), *Ceramics in context. Proceedings of the Internordic colloquium on ancient pottery held at Stockholm 13-15 June 1997*, Stockholm, 2001 (*Acta univ. Stock. Stockholm studies in classical archaeology*, 12), p. 115-126, and *ead.*, "Blood on the altars? On the treatment of blood at Greek sacrifices and the iconographical evidence", *AK* 48 (2005), p. 9-29.

In all, this is a very useful book to have at hand when working with Greek sacrifices, since it includes such a large amount of evidence, both thoroughly described and illustrated. One will find almost anything one looks for, either in the catalogues or in the footnotes, and certain items included are previously unpublished. In this sense, it definitely constitutes an addition to van Straten's *Hierà kalá*. Still, for the actual interpretation and discussion of the evidence, there is a curious lack of interest in the heart of the matter, Greek religion. Gebauer's focus on and interest in the iconography are his prime concern. His urge to demonstrate the validity of his method, to identify the specific types of figures and scenes used by the vase-painters, is so strong that one almost gets the impression he could have chosen to apply it to any topic. This is a descriptive study of Greek animal sacrifices on Attic vases which is not very interested in analyzing Greek cult. To give one specific example, there is no real discussion to what extent rituals such as *theoxenia* and *trapezomata*, often used to modify animal sacrifices of the *thysia* kind, may be distinguished in the pictorial evidence, either as direct representations or as more discrete references. The term *trapezomata* is not even found in the index. An interesting group of scenes showing women seated at tables with meat, which may relate to these rituals (p. 337, n. 1331, and p. 486, n. 1844), is briefly mentioned, but it would certainly have been interesting to have the meaning of this motif developed within the wider iconographic context. After going through such a large amount of material, Gebauer would have been in an excellent position to approach such intricate issues. Moreover, Gebauer takes the Olympian/chthonian model as valid for the basic theoretical approach to the evidence. A greater awareness of the difficulties inherent in the concepts Olympian and chthonian would have improved and deepened the quality of the analysis. As it is now, at numerous instances he simply explains an observation by resorting to Olympian/chthonian stereotypes, be it the choice of white and black animals (p. 19), the height of altars (p. 373) or the blood at *sphagia* sacrifices being poured into a *bothros* (p. 255). To consider oath sacrifices and purifications as chthonian rituals is certainly to transgress the valid use of this terminology (p. 255). More surprisingly, on p. 476 (and n. 1794) he suddenly declares the distinction between Olympian and chthonian sacrifices to be a modern construct. Finally, there is also a clear preference for using German scholarship within the discussion, leaving out some important studies, though some of these may have appeared too late to be included.⁷

In the end, hold on to your copy of van Straten's *Hierà kalá*, but do not hesitate to get Gebauer's *Pompe und Thysia* as well.

Gunnel Ekroth
(University of Stockholm)

Cornelia ISLER-KERÉNYI, *Civilizing Violence. Satyrs on 6th-Century Greek Vases*, Göttingen/Fribourg, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Academic Press, 2004. 1 vol. 15,5 × 23 cm, 123 p. (*Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, 208). ISBN : 3-525-53066-8/3-7278-1497-7.

Dans la foulée de son étude sur l'iconographie de Dionysos à l'époque archaïque (*Dionysos nella Grecia arcaica. Il contributo delle immagini* 2001), C. Isler-Kerényi

⁷ For example, P. BONNECHERE, "La μάχαιρα était dissimulée dans le κροῖον": quelques interrogations, *REG* 101 (1999), p. 21-35, and M. HALM-TISSERANT, "Le paysage sacré dans la peinture de vases grecque", *Ktema* 24 (1999), p. 243-250, as well as the works referred to above in n. 3 and 4.