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Milette Gaifman, Aniconism in Greek Antiquity.

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empire and gender within the period. Arresting as Galla is, however, I was left more intrigued about the emperor Honorius. The fact that he has not had a biography devoted to him, as Sivan remarks, the stories about his distinctive personality, the image of him on a coin with natty moustache and sideburns (189); the thoroughly creepy depiction of him in Wilkie Collins's *Antonina* (referenced on page 28), all suggest that Galla's half-brother is ripe for a study of his own.

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Milette Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xviii + 357. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-19-964578-7) \$185.00.

In this scholarly work, the origins of which were in a Princeton University doctoral dissertation, Gaifman explores the phenomenon of aniconism in ancient Greece from the early Iron Age to the Roman period, on the Greek mainland, in West Greece, the islands, and the East Greek world. She defines aniconism as the perception, worship, and experience of the divine through objects that do not make visual reference to particular divinities through their form or are not indicative of the identity of particular deities without some other clues, such as inscriptions, stories, or rituals (39). Cult images and aniconic manifestations of deities have been the subject of intense interest in recent years, with many critical books and articles. The very full footnotes and complete, 32-page bibliography are indicative of the depth of this study, as well as of the historical and current interest in a topic that is central to understanding Greek religious beliefs and ritual practices.

In the eighteenth century Winckelmann (*Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, 1764), using the schema suggested by ancient authors, especially Clement of Alexandria and Pausanias, promulgated an evolutionary progression with Greeks first worshipping deities in the form of primitive, unworked stones, and then, as their civilization developed, accepting the language of anthropomorphism with "iconism" becoming the norm, as represented in the ideal images of the Classical period. Johannes Adolph Overbeck, in a seminal 1864 article ("Über das Cultusobjekt bei den Griechen in seinen ältesten Gestaltungen," *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlich sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig philologische-historische Klasse* 16, 1864, pp. 121–72), introduced the term *anikonismus* and defined aniconism as an early phase in Greek religious worship. Gaifman and others can now demonstrate that aniconism and anthropomorphism, as well as theriomorphism (dealt with only in passing in this book), semi-anthropomorphism or semi-aniconism (e.g., semi-figural stelai, phalloi), in all of their possible permutations (e.g., rough rocks,

conical stones, trees, poles, logs, stelai, semi-figural, faceless busts, and statues of various materials) for the most part coexisted as choices that Greeks made for specific cults or ritual activities, for particular deities, and in specific local contexts. Anthropomorphism and aniconism should not be examined in opposition to one another or in a framework of historical or ideological progression.

In discussing the meaning and origins of aniconism (chapter 1), Gaifman shows that aniconism was known in ancient Egypt, e.g., Aten, the disk of the sun, and was prevalent in the Near East, especially along the Syro-Palestinian coast among both the Israelites for whom image-making was forbidden and among polytheistic peoples such as the Phoenicians.

Gaifman also deals with the absence of divine images or objects at certain shrines. She points out that in the visual language of the Greeks, especially in vase painting, the presence of a divinity is often implied, but not shown in cult scenes, including scenes of sacrifice. In fact, we know from literary and archaeological evidence that the central ritual act in Greek cult was the sacrifice and that the existence of a temple and an object representing the deity was secondary in importance to the altar or locus of sacrifice. As an example, there was no temple or cult image on the peak of Arcadian Mt. Lykaion where mounds of ash, burned bones, and votive gifts marked the centuries of animal sacrifice to Zeus (D. G. Romano and M. E. Voyatzis, "Excavating at the Birthplace of Zeus," *Expedition* 52, 2010, pp. 9–21; D. G. Romano and M. E. Voyatzis, "Mt. Lykaion Excavation and Survey Project, Upper Sanctuary: Preliminary Report 2004-2010," *Hesperia* forthcoming). Zeus' presence was felt in the expansive sky, the thunderclouds, and the quaking, earthquake-prone mountain. Gaifman discusses the prevalence of hermaic pillars, plain rectangular pillars with pyramidal or figural tops, and stelai at Arcadian sites. In the lower sanctuary at Mt. Lykaion a large number of bases for stelai and hermaic pillars were found, but it is not clear if the monuments represented Zeus or another deity or are dedications to Zeus (I. B. Romano, D. G. Romano, and G. H. Davis, "Monument Bases from the Sanctuary of Zeus on Mt. Lykaion: Methodology, Typology, Geology, Use, and Significance," Poster at ASMOSIA X International Conference, Rome, May 21–26, 2012, publication forthcoming). Gaifman confirms through her study the long-held impression that among the Greek gods Zeus was more often than other divinities worshipped in aniconic form, especially as stones and stelai.

Among the many cases of the use of aniconic images discussed by Gaifman, two from the Greek West are particularly interesting. At Metapontum in the so-called *area sacra*, the sacred precinct of the polis, near three temples and an array of public monuments, hundreds of stones and stelai were set up, some with inscriptions identifying the monuments as belonging to Apollo Lykeios; these should probably be interpreted as dedications. A freestanding pillar inscribed DIOS AFORA and dating to the sixth century BC was found outside the main precinct of the polis, aligned with an altar; this seems to have been the recipient, as a manifestation of Zeus, of sacrificial ritual and votive gifts.

Equally interesting because of the size of the corpus and the mixture of Greek and Punic characteristics is the evidence from the suburban sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros at the Sicilian site of Selinus, where stelai and hermaic pillars, multiple-

headed herms, and unworked stones were found in the Campo di Stele precinct with a fourth-century BC Punic *naikos* and two altars. Such chronological evidence that exists suggests that the unworked stones were deposited there from the seventh to the third centuries BC, while the worked stelai, some with inscriptions in Greek, belong to the sixth and fifth centuries BC; the herms are of Punic style and should probably be dated after the Carthaginian conquest of 409 BC. Zeus Meilichios is mentioned in at least six inscriptions in the nominative, one declaring "I am Meilichios." Personal names are also inscribed on some of the stelai, thus blurring the distinction between dedications and objects of divine veneration. Gaifman interprets at least some of these as markers of divine presence.

Gaifman also deals with the topic of vacant space and empty rock-cut thrones, such as the double throne inscribed with the names of Zeus and Hekate at Chalke, Rhodes. It is not clear how such empty thrones were used in the rituals of the cult place, but they could possibly have served as seats for portable images or as thrones for human participants who temporarily took the role of the divinity in the cult activity. With parallels in Near Eastern empty thrones of the gods, the Greek viewer's experience could also have required a mental image of the divine that is just suggested by the empty throne. A consideration of the Iron Age rock-cut niches and thrones in Phrygian Anatolia, mostly associated with Kybele, might have been of great interest to mention here for comparison and as a possible influence, especially for the rock-cut thrones of East Greece (S. Berndt-Ersöz, *Phrygian Rock-cut Shrines: Structure, Function and Cult Practices*, Leiden 2006).

The overwhelming impression that we are left with from Gaifman's study is that aniconism, as well as anthropomorphism, in Greek religion is a rich topic that cannot be understood in monochrome or without a close examination of the literary, epigraphical, and archaeological and other material evidence, including sculpture, coins, and vase painting. Gaifman shows an impressive familiarity with all the evidence and provides well-documented and thought-provoking chapters, bringing us closer to an understanding of the complex subject over the broad geography of the Mediterranean and over many centuries. The very full bibliography, two indices of relevant ancient literary and epigraphical sources, and the subject index are all extremely useful for the reader.

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