Insgesamt stellt das vorgelegte Werk eine sehr informative Arbeit dar, die eine wichtige Quellengattung, nämlich die Inschriften für die Frage der Viehwirtschaft im klassischen und hellenistischen Griechenland erschließt. Daß epigraphische Zeugnisse alleine nicht ausreichen, um sich ein umfassendes Bild dieser Wirtschaftsform zu machen, erkennt der Autor selbst völlig richtig. Einen wirklichen, qualitativen Erkenntniszuwachs, was die grundsätzliche Frage nach dem Verhältnis von ackerbaulicher und vielwirtschaftlicher Landnutzung betrifft, kann ich allerdings in den Ausführungen Ch.s nicht feststellen. Dies gilt auch für die Frage der Transhumanz. Weder bringt uns der Definitionsversuch Ch.s weiter, noch geht die anschließende Diskussion zum System der Wechsel-Weide-Wirtschaft über das hinaus, was ich selbst vor kurzer Zeit in einem Überblicksbeitrag diese Wirtschaftsform betreffend formuliert habe.


Ein Repertoire und eine Konkordanz der Inschriften, eine thematische und eine umfassende allgemeine Bibliographie sowie mehrere sorgfältig verfaßte Indizes erleichtern die Erschließung wie sie auch die Nützlichkeit des Bändchens insgesamt noch weiter erhöhen.

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Superstition is one of those notions that provide a measure of the cultural distance between the man on the Clapham omnibus and the modern academy. Though the former would be at a loss to define the term, he has no hesitation in providing examples or instances: to leave food in the fridge for the fairies is su-

perstitious. With the academy, the case is altered. Two factors, work on the historical semantics (Begriffsgeschichte) of key words in theological discourse and then the structuralist discovery of the Other, have assigned superstition as a scientific term to the Musée des idées mortes. To take a concrete illustration: in place of the 64 columns of Ernst Rieß’ article 'Aberglaube' in the first half-volume of the old Pauly-Wissowa, published in 1894, with its interminable lists of absurd ancient beliefs, 'Der Neue Pauly' has – nothing, no entry at all. Instead, the reader is advised to look under the corresponding ancient terms, desidaidmonía and supersticio.

As it lost its scientific credentials, superstition began to be historicised and relativised. In the Classical field, this process began in the Netherlands, with H. Bolkestein’s essay on Theophrastus’ Superstitious Man (Charact. XVI), and P. J. Koets’ thesis on the semantics of desidaidmonía, both of which appeared in 1929. But it is mainly since the 1970s that ancient historians have intensively explored the ambiguities and control functions of the two ancient terms, particularly that of supersticio. More recently, there are signs that historians in other fields are beginning to re-evaluate the term superstition. In 2005, for example, a 'Past & Present' conference at the University of Essex at Colchester, UK set out to examine the variety of its contexts of use, mainly in Early Modern Europe and in contemporary Latin America and the Far East, but also in Antiquity. Under what conditions do accusations of superstition intensify? What anxieties do they express? What boundaries does the term police? What sanctions are imposed? How does ‘superstition’ relate to other negative judgements within the symbolic order? What is the relation between superstition and magic? How important cross-culturally is the criterion of rationality? But we can also look critically at the beliefs themselves: are superstitions necessarily or always 'popular'? How does superstition relate to conflicts over religious innovation? Or to the investment of objects with power?

At first blush, Dale Martin’s (hereafter M.) book might appear to be part of this new historical interest in superstition. But if so, more by accident than design. It seeks instead to answer a rather specific question: Why was it natural for pagan intellectuals to consider early Christianity superstitious? The answer: because from the fifth century BC, and above all after Plato, philosophers, or rather ‘intellectuals’, were determined to defend the proposition, here provocatively called the Grand Optimal Illusion, but known more neutrally as ‘philosophical theology’, that God, or the gods, can do only good. In so doing, they were flying in the face of most pagan opinion, which they accordingly dismissed as ‘superstition’. Since Christians, like ordinary pagans, both rejected the correlation between cosmology and ethics that subtended the intellectuals’ claim and had no difficulty in accepting the idea that illness might be caused by evil daimones, they too were bound to be considered superstitious.

With some zig-zagging, the argument follows a trajectory from the claims of the Hippocratic De morbo sacro all the way to Eusebius’ Praeparatio evangelica. It can be summarised as follows. Protests against popular conceptions of divinity can be found already in Xenophanes, and a century later in De morbo sacro, but it was the application to the divine world of the Socratic injunction against harming one’s enemies (e.g. Adeimantus in the Republic), and Plato’s conception
of a providential demiurge in the *Timaeus*, that founded an alternative philosophical consensus about the true nature of divinity: because gods are higher beings than humans, they must necessarily, and invariably, be morally better. The implication of this view for popular religious practice is first attested by Theophrastus’ sketch of the Superstitious Man, whose anxieties about divine attack offend the new intellectual sensibility, not because they are morally wrong but because they are bad-mannered vis-à-vis the Other World. Hitherto, *deisidaimonia* had meant ‘piety’; from now on it might also be used in a negative sense, to denote a vice invented and controlled by philosophers – superstition. A survey of the semantics of the word in Diodorus Siculus represents the nature of the ‘debate’ over the term in the Hellenistic period, concluding that the negative or critical sense of *deisidaimonia* hardly made headway in all that time; so Plutarch’s essay, which argues that superstition, as excessive piety (166e), is worse than atheism, must come as a considerable surprise. That essay itself receives short shrift, for Plutarch’s main value to M. is his recourse to demonology (notoriously not mentioned there), which serves to underscore the growing nervousness among intellectuals of the High Empire about the coherence of the Grand Optimal Illusion. Daemonology, especially theories about the influence of wicked *daimones*, is taken as a symptom of doubt about the GOI. The connection of all this to early Christianity is provided by Galen’s denunciation of the Jewish, and by implication Christian, claim that God is outside Nature. Since Jews and Christians considered creation, though divine, to be flawed, and God capable of intervening miraculously in Nature, Galen (as a representative intellectual) must have considered them superstitious. The correlative objections to Christian belief in a wrathful God and the power of wicked *daimones* are viewed through Celsus’ *Alêthês Logos*. The three final chapters explore how the frank admission of the existence of wicked *daimones*, exemplified in Origen, Iamblichus and Eusebius, induced a shift from the Classical model of self-regulating divine *isonomia* towards one of (selective) divine patronage of human clients. Eusebius’ denunciation of the superstition of ‘polyarchy’ and heresy alike marks the final collapse of an ultimately Classical divine model in favour of a monarchical one.

This is heady stuff. M. is certainly correct to follow Durkheim, as he also did in an earlier article on this theme (1996) not alluded to here, in pointing out that ancient superstition has nothing to do with the ‘supernatural’ itself, he claims, a category invented only by Descartes, yet the OED, itself notoriously slapdash about such matters, lists numerous usages of the early sixteenth century, i.e. more than a century before 1637). He is surely right too in denying that rationality serves as the criterion of superstition in antiquity. It is also salutary to find an uncompromisingly intellectualist account of the ‘invention’ of superstition: M. has thrown down a challenge to the emergent consensus, deriving essentially from Denise Grodzynski’s influential article (REA 76, 1974, 36–66) that views ancient accusations of superstition as marking the limits of acceptable religious behaviour, first within Roman cult narrowly conceived, and later, from the Flavians, within a much more vaguely-conceived ‘religion of the Roman empire’, and finally turned against their (erstwhile) persecutors by Christian apologists. Such a challenge is especially welcome in a context in which, as one review of C.
Ando’s reader ‘Roman Religion’ (2003) pointed out, the intellectual content or aspect of ancient religion has been largely neglected, even denied, by the modern emphasis upon pragmatics.

On the other hand the particular form of the argument as presented here is bound to arouse considerable misgivings. This has little to do with the fact that, though he now holds a named chair at Yale in the history of religions, M. has always been mainly a New Testament man; for his previous work on the early Christian body and on the family shows him to be thoroughly at home in the Classical field. The main difficulty stems, I think, from the decision to write a book on a rather technical issue for a general audience. This has the great advantage of readability; and I can confirm that several of the early-modern historians who came to Colchester had read the book and were impressed by its easy style and bold argument. On the other hand, the decision has its costs. How is one to judge the omission from the bibliography of a good dozen important discussions of (aspects of) superstition in antiquity – for example H. Erbse’s fundamental article on Plutarch’s ‘Deisid.’ (1952) and G. Lozza’s useful commentary on the same text (1980)? Were they perhaps considered too specialised for the audience? A general readership also meant that there could be no close discussion of Greek texts. It is true that a good number of passages, particularly from Diodorus, are cited; in quite a number of cases however the account given is questionable, even sketchy – but, given his audience, M. has to refrain from longer discussion, and the intended audience, having no background, is not in a position to raise a protest. M. has rightly refused to write an exclusively semantic study in the manner of Koets; but in reaction he has gone to the opposite extreme. There is for example no discussion of the use of deisidaimôn/deisidaimonta/deisidaimonein in Julio-Claudian Greek prose authors, in Josephus or the Second Sophistic (Lucian alone is mentioned – once). On the other hand, in view of M.’s initial problem-atic, what are we to make of the fact that Celsus, so far as we know, did not use the term at all in his attack on Christianity? As a result, the focus blurs: the imperial/Christian chapters – more than half the book – discuss not superstition but all manner of critique of ‘popular belief’. Are these terms truly synonyms?

Writing for a general audience also means that M. is tempted to get away with a highly simplified account of ancient philosophical religion. For example, we hear nothing of the role of Heraclitus’ wise ‘Zeus’ in its formation; the importance of the Hippocratic De morbo sacro in the development of a negative account of civic religion preceding Theophrastus ‘On Piety’ is exaggerated – Empedocles (e.g. frgs. 128 and 136 f DK) would have been more telling; and it is misleading to present Aristotle as merely reproducing the Platonic idea of God – the most striking aspect of his cosmology is after all not its ethical thrust, which is negligible, but the centrality of physics. Even more odd is the leap taken from Plato to Galen: in representing the Grand Optimal Illusion as a sort of naively arrogant ‘Besserwisserei’ that collapses in the third century AD, M. is forced to ignore the entire Hellenistic discussion of Plato’s legacy. Yet each school was perfectly aware of the problems involved in claiming that God must be good (the Stoics for example claimed that, because it was so difficult, theology should be the last subject to be taught; the Academic position, as represented by Cotta [Cicero ND 3.93], was that all accounts of divinity are necessarily problematic) and answered them each in its own fashion: Theophrastus already explained disorder/evil by referring to the disordered nature of the world, as opposed to God; the Epicureans saw the gods as ethical paradigms free of any involvement with natural events, and so with evil; the Stoic identification of God with fate and provi-
dence produced a whole variety of answers to the problem of theodicy: for example, that good and evil are necessarily interdependent; or Epictetus’ argument that evil is the result of irrational human choices and acceptance of false propositions. Moreover not only does M. ignore Carneades’ demolition of the claim that the gods must be sentient, rational and in possession of all virtue – a frontal attack on the ‘GOI’ in the mid-second century BC, he makes no mention of the accommodation all the schools, except the Cynics, made with civic cult: the Stoics stoutly defended divination, opposed vegetarianism and considered civic religion an approximation to the truth (Cleantheus, Zeno’s successor, even defended popular religion (tourt court); Peripatetics (Theophrastus), Epicureans, Academics and Pyrrhonists all held, for different reasons, that the practice of civic cult was acceptable. In doing so, they were of course following the example of Socrates (Xen. Mem. 1.3.11; 4.3.16).

We must also be chary of accepting M.’s claim that Theophrastus’ Superstitious Man represents an early salvo in this claimed war. He needs the argument, because otherwise there is hardly any reason for thinking that desisdaimoníα acquired the negative connotation he wishes to give it until the Academic and Cynic attacks on popular religious fears and excesses. But it is impossible to isolate chap. XVI from the other Characters in this way, and claim that it really belongs with ‘On Piety’. As Jebb remarked almost a century ago: «[The Characters] have been regarded, not from the philosopher’s, but from the artist’s point of view; they have not been analysed, but drawn as they strike the eye». The Superstitious Man is as exquisitely rebarbative as the Gross or the Mean Man, and in just the same manner – there is no special sub-text here. Moreover, Theophrastus’ sardonic eye-delights in remarking religious ineptitude among others of his imaginary personae too: the Mikrophilotatos, we remember, will nail up a bit of hide from the forehead of an ox he has sacrificed directly opposite the entrance of his little private palaistra in order to remind everyone what a great chap he is (21). The Superstitious Man is contemptible not because he does not understand that the gods are good but because he has no proper courage vis-à-vis the Other World and behaves towards it like a frightened old woman.

Problematic too is the treatment of superstītio. The short chapter devoted to the Latin term is interpellated between the discussions of Galen and Celsus. Though he does not say so in so many words, M. seems to have designed it as a sort of hinge between the presentation of the philosophers’ desisdaimoníα and the introduction of Christianity (which occupies much of the remainder of the book). He rightly observes that the semantics of the Latin term differ from those of the Greek in significant ways, particularly in the political conception of religion, with its high wastage rate of low-grade religious specialists. In that debate, religio, prominently on display in Varro’s Ant. Rev. Div. (ap. Augustine Civ. Dei 6.9) and Cicero’s Nat. Deor. and Div. This stress reinforces the impression that superstītio is little more than a translation of desisdaimoníα. However, to judge from the earliest extant occurrences of the abstract noun, in Cicero’s speeches, the word superstītio was most likely coined in the second half of the second century BC (developed out of the negative inflection of the adjective superstītiosus, which M. will have none of) to denote dispersed, voluntaristic religious action not sanctioned by mos maiorum. From the start, superstītio marked the tension between the claimed right of the politico-social élite to control the religious system in their own sense, and the preference of those excluded from the theodicy of good fortune (the Weberian ‘Theodizee des Glücks’) for a primarily instrumental conception of religion, with its high wastage rate of low-grade religious specialists. In that debate, religio meant the same as superstītio. To my mind, M. has reversed the true direction of influence: it was only thanks to the wider, ‘political’ notion of superstītio that desisdaimoníα came to be used in a strongly negative sense. Prior to that, it seems to me, the negative connotations of the word one finds in Polybius, or even in Plutarch (apart from Stoic. repugn. and Non posse suaviter), owe more to the sophists’ and the Cynics’ critique of political manipulation and popular religion than to the GOI.
One could also question a number of M.’s other positions, above all the stress he lays upon daemonology in the alleged collapse of the GOI, especially in Origen – as though Xenocrates, Plato’s successor as head of the Academy, had not envisaged ecstatic and self-mutilating religious acts as prompted by wicked daemons (Plut. de Iside 26, 361b), and as though Antiochus of Ascalon had not re-introduced daemonology, including the role of wicked daimones, back into Platonism in the first half of the first century BC. But I do not want to end on a negative note. Although M.’s account of the history of ancient superstition seems to me flawed, he has raised two important issues that merit further discussion. The first concerns the extent and nature of the intellectual, or even theological, content of deisidaimonía and its relation to superstition. The second concerns the translatability and wider utility of the notion of superstition for historians. The man on the Clapham bus may be a hopeless case, but has the time now come for it to be revived in the academy?

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2. Die von H. Rix edierten ’Etruskischen Texte’ (ET), deren Neuauflage derzeit an der Universität Halle vorbereitet wird, verzeichnen für Russellae 61, für Vetulonia 15 Inschriften des ’Instrumentum’; dazu kommen noch jeweils 4 bzw. 5 Steininschriften. Die fast 600 Nummern des vorliegenden Faszikels scheinen demgegenüber einen gewaltigen Textzuwachs anzuzeigen. Jedoch bestehen die allermeisten Inschriften aus lediglich einem oder zwei Buchstaben; gemäß den Kriterien der ET, nur sprachlich (potentiell) relevante Texte von mindestens drei Buchstaben Umfang aufzunehmen, reduziert sich die Zahl auf 75 Texte für Russellae und 73 für Vetulonia. 54 der letztgenannten sind Helminschriften aus einem Depot in Vetulonia, die – teilweise fragmentarisch – durchwegs haspnaś lauten, offenbar Ausrüstungsstücke einer ’Privatarmee’ der Familie Haspna. A. Maggiani zieht p. 85 das 470 zum Kampf gegen Veii ausgesandte Heer der Fabier