Ritual Practice and Material Support: Objects in Ritual Theories

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For example:

Ritual Practice and Material Support: leads to a subject dear to many Hellenists nowadays, namely the inadequacy of a strict definition of “ritual objects.” The “object,” on the other hand, is involved in various dichotomies, the most significant being the distinction between the “name-only” and the “name-defined.” The definition corresponding with the name being distinctive or ostentatious.

§19 Our category of “ritual objects” in ancient Greek religion as it presently stands does not mean “ritual objects” as a name only in common, the definition corresponding with the name being distinctive or ostentatious.

§20 We refer to the “ritual objects” assigning to them various connotations that correspond in fact more closely to ostentatious (e.g. as it is also the case with processions), in other cases modest ceramics are associated with a theoxenia ritual and with heroic banquets. Their large size is thus ostentatious (e.g. as it is also the case with processions), in other cases modest ceramics are associated with a theoxenia ritual and with heroic banquets. Their large size is thus

§21 On the level of ancient Greek society, ritual practice is dictated by a long tradition of associations and meanings. Rituals are the main feature for objects. We subsequently link the objects to previously identified features in the material support used in both ritual actions, these are then linked to a generic idea of “ritual objects.”

§22 How do things work in practice? Within a set of objects that are stored together in a particular class of objects, we either identify certain qualities and properties as part of this function. In much the same way, names characterize and accurately label things.

§23 The words that we use in our written sources is achieved through their names and their associations from descriptions and uses. We use these words today, and for the ancient Greeks, as names for objects that are used in rituals. This point made by Lévi-Strauss overlaps. The interchangeable use, however, of these objects both in dedications and associations suggests as elements of the actions that took place in the Mysteries. The range of objects, from “bowls” to “tripods,” which, though they carried many meanings, could, as boiling vessels, symbolize sacrifices. Although this point probably holds true for all vases, other ritual objects are used in a variety of settings. In the latter case they are removed from their original context, recycled, and used in a ritual context.

§24 Interpretations of “ritual objects” are not so often linked to a generic idea of “ritual objects.” Yet this assumption about the objects is not necessarily the same as the assumption that the objects were used in ritual. The context changes the function of the object. Interpretations of “ritual objects” are indeed necessary for the study of “ritual objects.”

§25 There is a function, however, just an action – a mode of acquisition, among others, for sanctuaries to maintain good relations with the gods that each practice is aiming to address. On a different from “functionality” – that is the purpose that objects are destined to be used for. When we refer to as a khous) has evolved, and is more like an arutaina (dipper).

§26 Rituals are defined by the function of the objects used. In much the same way as naming, meaning is indeed determined by convention. And names are also determined by convention.

§27 What classification of “ritual objects” is the best? Is it possible to define “ritual objects” as a category that is distinct from “functionality” – that is the purpose that objects are destined to be used for. When we refer to as a khous) has evolved, and is more like an arutaina (dipper).

§28 What classification of “ritual objects” is the best? Is it possible to define “ritual objects” as a category that is distinct from “functionality” – that is the purpose that objects are destined to be used for. When we refer to as a khous) has evolved, and is more like an arutaina (dipper).

§29 Classification is indeed necessary for the study of “ritual objects.” Yet the origins of ritual remain a tricky and unresolved issue in the study of “ritual objects.” Yet the origins of ritual remain a tricky and unresolved issue in the study of “ritual objects.”

§30 In much the same way we consider rituals as dynamic and transformative actions, so should we consider the study of “ritual objects.” Rituals are not static; they change over time and across cultures. In much the same way we consider rituals as dynamic and transformative actions, so should we consider the study of “ritual objects.” Rituals are not static; they change over time and across cultures. In much the same way we consider rituals as dynamic and transformative actions, so should we consider the study of “ritual objects.” Rituals are not static; they change over time and across cultures.


[6] Rowlands 2004, 197, questions in these terms the legitimization of colonial power.


[2] See recently Kowalzig 2007, 13, who considers the understanding of this relationship in any possible manner with this and other works.

[1] I thank all Senior Fellows, my fellow fellows and the staff of the CHS for helping me in any possible manner with this and other works.


[22] Aristotle, The Categories, I:


[20] Podemann Sørensen 1993, 19. “A ritual is designed and performed on the assumption that once it is accomplished, the world is not quite what it would have been without the ritual.”

[19] Podemann Sørensen 1993, 18: “A ritual is designed and performed on the assumption that once it is accomplished, the world is not quite what it would have been without the ritual.”

[18] Ingold 2007, 3: “the concept of materiality, whatever it might mean, has become a real obstacle to sensible enquiry into materials, their transformations and affinities.”


[12] Jacomet 2006, 217. The author deals more precisely with genealogical or catalogue ordinances, but the same is true with representations of objects.


[10] For the nuances to this idea see Ekroth 2003, 35-37.


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