



# Orphée et l'Orphisme dans l'Antiquité gréco-romaine (Variorum Collected Studies Series)

*Luc Brisson*

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The figure of Orpheus has long exercised a potent influence on religious thought. Yet what we know directly about Orphism comes from a scatter of isolated and often very short fragments quoted in the works of Platonists of the Roman period, notably Proclus, Damascius and Olympiodorus. The author's concern here is to establish the context in which these passages were cited, and to trace the development of the written tradition, from the texts which contain a critique of the beliefs of the Homeric era to those, whether newly composed or transformed, which show signs of adaptation to later religious and philosophical movements, among them Stoicism and Platonism. In sharp contrast to views held by others, it is argued that it is possible to map out a process of evolution, amongst other criteria by focusing on the role and place of Chronos in the Orphic theogony. The author also asks whether there really ever existed true Orphic sects with a cult with specific rites, and would conclude that the present evidence cannot be held to substantiate this. Orphisme a pendant longtemps exercé une puissante influence sur la pensée religieuse. Cependant, ce que nous connaissons directement de l'Orphisme se réduit à une poignée de fragments isolés et souvent très courts qui se trouvent éparpillés dans les oeuvres de Platoniciens ayant vécu sous l'Empire romain, surtout Proclus, Damascius et Olympiodore. Dans les articles qui composent ce recueil, l'auteur s'est attaché à reconstituer les contextes dans lesquels ces passages sont cités, et à comprendre comment s'est développée la tradition écrite à laquelle ils appartiennent, depuis les textes qui critiquent les croyances véhiculées par Homère et par Hésiode et qui, ayant fait l'objet d'une rédaction ou d'une transformation récente, présentent les signes d'une adaptation des mouvements religieux ou philosophiques tardifs, le Stoïcisme et le Médioplatonisme entre autres. S'opposant en cela à beaucoup d'autres spécialistes, l'auteur pense qu'il est possible de retracer une évolution dans la production des textes orphiques, en se prenant notamment pour critère le rôle et la place de Chronos dans les différentes versions de la théogonie orphique. Il pose aussi la question de savoir s'il y eut de véritables sectes orphiques mettant en oeuvre un culte avec des rites spécifiques; sur ce point, ses conclusions sont négatives, car les témoignages directs manquent.

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