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G. Woolf, I. Bultrighini & C. Norman, eds, *Sanctuaries and experience. Knowledge, practice and space in the ancient world* (Potsdamer altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 83), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2024. 474 pp. ISBN 978-3-515-13399-9. <https://doi.org/10.25162/9783515134071>

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Sanctuaries have been the focus of scholarly attention since the beginning of the study of ancient religions, but the topic still offers room for new approaches and theoretical frameworks. One example is the Sanctuary Project, undertaken by a group of scholars mainly in Erfurt and London, and led by Jörg Rüpke and Greg Woolf. The present volume stems from a meeting with this group and aims to explore how sanctuaries formed human experiences and religious knowledge in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies during the last and first millennia (BC and AD), in particular by applying perspectives of the “Lived Ancient Religion” approach and the materiality of ancient religion (for this approach, see V. Gasparini *et al.* eds, *Lived religion in the ancient Mediterranean world*, Erfurt 2020).

The ‘Introduction’ explains that the book originated in a scholarly discussion of the concept of “sanctuary”, which was agreed upon as being an institution anchored in space, marked out as special and separated from other lived spaces, and a place allowing contact with the sacred, but not including burial grounds or private houses. The purpose was not to provide a unitary theory of how sanctuaries participated in forming experience, but to bring out the variety of forms that religious experiences took. The editors also admit that they did not succeed in identifying any particular trends for sanctuaries over time and place, apart from them increasing in number and complexity.

The 18 papers are organized in roughly chronological order but can also be addressed more thematically (as Julia Kindt does in her ‘Afterthought’) in order to bring out the range and results of the volume. Three papers focus on contexts less frequently studied when it comes to ancient sanctuaries, illustrating the many shapes sanctuary space could take. Marco Serino discusses so-called sacred houses used by civic sub-groups or clans in Western Greek colonial contexts. The focus lies in how to distinguish these structures archaeologically, but the methodology would have profited from a stricter and more consistent interpretation of the evidence and the selection of comparative material to clarify what actually makes these architectural complexes *hierai oikiai* and not rich regular domestic dwellings. Giovanni Mastronuzzi, Davide Tamiano and Giacomo Vizzino’s contribution presents two Archaic Apulian sanctuaries with rich ceramic, zooarchaeological and archaeobotanical remains, which point to the consumption of food lying at the centre of the rituals. There is

an interesting discussion of cooking and consumption vessels, and what they can reveal about the number of participants and their organization. The three authors were responsible for individual sections of the text, which unfortunately results in overlaps, omissions and certain inconsistencies. The attempted comparison of the assemblages with the Greek evidence for sacrificial ritual is better avoided, as the Messapian evidence deserves to be explored on its own. Camilla Norman offers an analysis of Daunian stelai from northern Apulia with a ritually related figurative iconography. Since the Daunian culture apparently had no purposefully built sacred and demarcated spaces, she argues that ritual activity created a temporary sacrality through performance and storytelling, and the iconography can be read as references to a cognitive and sensorial landscape. The author somewhat surprisingly contrasts the lived religion of the Daunians, taken to be constantly in the making, with a view of ancient Greek religion as being strict, static and regulated, almost dogmatic, contrary to the consensus of current scholarship.

Greek sanctuaries are addressed in three papers. Ilaria Bultrighini looks at the establishment of the cult of Artemis Amarysia in Attica by Peisistratos. She argues for the cult being an Athenian replication of the Eretrian cult, with a main sanctuary in the countryside and a smaller urban one in the city centre, even deliberately planned to have the same distance between them as at Eretria. The rich Apollo sanctuary at Despotiko is discussed by Erica Angliker, Yannis Kourayos and Kornilia Daifa from the perspective of the visitors’ experiences of travel and activities on site. The journey to this small island was dangerous and may also have triggered recollections of myths, while on the site the archaeological finds indicate the visitors being engaged in dancing, commemorated by dedications. Esther Eidinow focuses on the role narratives played in the creation of actual and imagined sacred space. Ritual norms functioned as a form of narrative boundary setting in Greek sanctuaries, while specific stories regarding particular cult locations was part of an imagined “travel literature” of sanctuaries.

Three papers deal with temples but from surprisingly different perspectives. Dominic Dalglish applies a lived approach to the impact of planning, constructing and using temples for religious life, including the conceptions of the associated gods. His analysis of the name and sanctuary of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus at Baalbek suggests that the construction of the temple demanded or made possible a reconceptualization of the divinity, who received his name from the sheer enormity of the temple project. Thomas Gamelin explores how Egyptian temples were constructed to lead the priests from sunlight to darkness, and by gradually raised floors and lowered ceilings to an inner space conceived as a symbolic grotto and a celestial space on earth. The different registers of reliefs further guided the movements of the

priests and together with the architecture suggest a symbolism and experience never clearly explained in the texts. Jaime Alvar Ezquerro and José Carlos López-Gómez's careful analysis of the archaeological evidence for sacred public architecture in Roman Spain shows how temple building and maintenance were discontinued from around 200 AD. They propose that local oligarchs no longer wanted to pay for public works and that even if polytheistic religion was not abandoned it now had sought new material expressions for the communication with the gods.

Two papers discuss the relation between the sacred and the profane, especially in the relation to the use and perception of space. Jörg Rüpke addresses the issue from the use of altars in the communication with the gods, and how they functioned as objects for marking centres of gravity-defining elements of sanctuaries. The discussion partly deals with altars in funerary and domestic settings, in spite of the introduction's hesitation to consider such contexts as sanctuaries. Csaba Szabó's paper provides a clear-cut theoretical framework to distinguish various levels of sacralization of space. His application of the taxonomy to the Danubian provinces reveals a broad and complex spectrum of natural, fabricated and imagined sacralized spaces mainly associated with urban and military environments.

The private visitor's sensory experience of a sanctuary is discussed by Elena Franchi from the perspective of walking through Delphi, based on Pausanias' and Plutarch's accounts. Walking triggered both philosophical and intellectual thinking and aesthetic contemplation, and established a relation between the present and the past as embodied in the monuments and dedications seen and discussed. Georgia Petridou investigates the conceptual links between illness and initiation in the writings of Aelius Aristides, in particular the relation between the mystery cult of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis and the healing cult of Asklepios at Pergamon. She argues that Aristides' "relation mapping" of these two religious experiences may have been inspired by the situation in Athens which he came in contact with during his studies in the city.

The human dimensions of sanctuaries and the many private reasons why they were visited and how these occasions were commemorated are reviewed by Rita Sassu. Her case study explores the Heraion on Samos, in particular the dedication of offerings left by the visitors and the use of sanctuary space. Julietta Steinhauer aims to reconstruct what it was like to be a foreign woman on Hellenistic Delos, either free, freed or a slave, based on archaeological material and epigraphy related to the cult of the Syrian gods and the grave stelai from Rheneia. The evidence suggests a diverse and rich socio-religious experience for these women, in particular in relation to their economic and social status, and involvement in the cult.

The materiality of religion perspective comes to the fore in three chapters from the perspective of images and representa-

tions. Kajta Sporn offers an extensive study of who dedicated private portraits in Roman temples and where in the temple these images were placed. She reveals interesting differences over time as to the effects of the rise of ruler and Imperial cults, as well as distinctions between the city of Rome and the provinces, Italy and the West, and the Greek East. Marlis Arnhold addresses how the two categories of divine images known as *simulacra* and *ornamenta* were recognized by the ancient viewers in Imperial Rome. A hierarchical relationship between the two has been assumed by scholars, but the complexity of these images and the problems the ancient viewer faced suggest that the difference was less important for the general worshipper, even if clues as to the identification could be given by the architectural setting. Anna-Katharina Rieger looks at lived religion in Pompeii, reconstructing ordinary religious experiences by using the metaphor of "pathways" to explore iconographic links and spatial connections based on representations of richly dressed female figures, which appear as public statues and paintings but also figurines in domestic contexts. These images could be goddesses as well as elite women, depending on how they were seen, experienced and interpreted, but would still send a message of them as important, good, admirable and powerful.

Collective volumes tend to be heterogenous, which is one of their strengths; so also for this book, but a greater degree of coherence between the contributions would have increased its impact. As it is now, there are evident differences regarding aims, methods and theoretical choices, which is surprising considering the clear theoretical starting point of the entire volume outlined in the 'Introduction'. There is also very little or no effort to have the papers engage with each other, apart from the short final 'Afterthought' offered by Julia Kindt.

The text is occasionally badly proofread with misspelled names, works referred to in the footnotes missing in the bibliographies, and incorrect placement of sites on maps. Some the illustrations and maps are too small to be useful. An index of two pages only for sites is surprising for a book of this extent. Still, the value of the volume lies in the ambition of a different approach to sanctuaries, by focusing on the experience of the visitors, and as such, the book offers many stimulating examples of interest to scholars working on a particular cult, region or period.

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