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A COMPANION TO THE

ARCHAEOLOGY OF RELIGION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

EDITED BY RUBINA RAJA AND JÖRG RÜPKE

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Abbreviations

A&A	Antike und Abendland
AE	L'Année Épigraphique
AJAH	American Journal of Ancient History
AJP	American Journal of Philology
AM	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung
ANRW	Temporini, Hildegard and Wolfgang Haase, eds. 1972–. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt,* Berlin
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CIMRM	Vermaseren, Maarten J. 1956–60. *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, The Hague
CP	Classical Philology
CQ	Classical Quarterly
CW	Classical World
EPRO	Etudes preliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
FGrHist	Jacoby, Felix 1923–. *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, Berlin
HABES	Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien
HrwG	Hubert,Cancik, Burkhard Gladigow, and Karl-Heinz Kohl, eds. 1988–. *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*. Stuttgart.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae
IGUR	Moretti, Luigi 1968–90. *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, Rome
IKnidos	Wolfgang Blümel, 1992–2010. *Die Inschriften von Knidos*, Bonn
ILLRP	Attilio Degrassi, 1957–63. *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae*, Florence
ILS	Dessau, Hermann, 1892–1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Berlin
IMilet	Herrmann, Peter, Wolfgang Günther, and Norbert Ehrhardt, eds. 1997–2006. *Die Inschriften von Milet*, Berlin
JdI	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies

LSAM	Franciszek Sokolowski, 1955. *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*, Paris
LSG	Franciszek Sokolowski, 1969. *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, Paris
LSS	Franciszek Sokolowski, 1962. *Lois sacrées des cités grecques: Supplément*, Paris
LTUR	Eva M. Steinby ed. 2002. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, Rome
MEFRA	Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Antiquité
NP	Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds. 1996–2003. *Der Neue Pauly.* Stuttgart.
PawB	Potsdamer altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge
PCPhS	Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
QS	Quaderni di storia
RG-RW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RH	Revue historique
RM	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung
RhMus	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
RICIS	Laurent Bricault, 2005. *Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques*, Paris
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
SIRIS	Ladislav Vidman, 1969. *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionum Isidis et Sarapidis*, Berlin
ThesCRA	Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YCS	Yale Classical Studies
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

CHAPTER 1

Archaeology of Religion, Material Religion, and the Ancient World

Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke

Problems of an Archaeology of Religion

What was it like to enter a sacred cave? Ruth Whitehouse undertook it to reconstruct such an experience for the Grotta di Porto Badisco, a cave in the Southeast of Italy intensively painted in the fifth or fourth millennium BCE:

> Thresholds are of great importance in rites of passage and the caves offer a series of natural thresholds from one zone to another, with the most significant being the cave entrance, where one turns one's back on light and the familiar world and climbs into a dark unknown reality. As individuals bend, twist and wriggle along the dark corridors of the cave, listening to the strange cave sounds, feeling the rock pressing into them, the sharp wetness of the stalactites, the yielding softness of areas of silt deposits, the sudden release of constriction as they move into a chamber large enough to stand up in, they learn through their bodies of the importance of the experience they are undergoing and its transformative nature. (Whitehouse 2001: 166)

Whitehouse is quite aware of the difficulties of reconstructing emotional experiences from archaeological material, pointing not only to cultural mediation, but also to the "impact of individual personality and biography on bodily behaviour" (161). Similar insights can lead to very different conclusions, as a second and everyday example may teach us:

> The three ways our bodies determine what shows up in our world—innate structures, general acquired skills, and specific cultural skills—can be contrasted by considering how each contributes to the fact that to Western human beings a chair affords sitting. Because we have the sort of bodies that get tired and that bend backwards the knees, chairs can show up for us—but not for flamingos, say—as affording sitting. But chairs can only solicit sitting once

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> we have learned to sit. Finally, only because we Western Europeans are brought up in a culture where one sits on chairs, do chairs solicit us to sit on them. Chairs would not solicit sitting in traditional Japan. (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1999: 104)

A certain reluctance to delve into such problems and perhaps a feeling that religion loses in importance anyhow has for most of the twentieth century kept attempts at an archaeology of religion at bay. But things have shifted significantly. Today, archaeology data pertaining to religion and ritual actions are taken as seriously in Religious Studies and History of Religion as religion is taken seriously within Archaeology. This is as much driven by professional research as by public demand. Caves, or more generally, sites taken as religious sites by local users and likewise by foreign visitors feature high on the list of touristic top locations. Religion fascinates in this rapidly-changing world where distant regions of the world are much more closely connected, but where cultures, traditions and religions still are very different and practiced differently from region to region and even within regions. Chairs, on the other hand, and objects of routine or occasional religious usage demand explanation and justification in museums and expositions or in religious display. Here, archaeological and religious historical research meet, even if they have two very different lines of ancestry in scholarship.

The functional approach within processual archaeology left many questions relating to religion unanswered. Too often, "religion" served as a final interpretive resort once instrumental, and thus rational, explanations had not led to any result. When one was not able to explain an archaeological phenomenon, it was often labelled dissatisfactorily "cultic". Here, post-processual archaeology, in particular since the 1990s, has opened up new paths. Archaeological data might be used in order to reconstruct rituals and inquire about ideology or belief systems underlying social action. Descriptive accounts of "Christian" or "Islamic Archaeology" or "Archaeology of the Holy Land" have been supplemented and supplanted by "Archaeology of Belief", "Archaeology of Cult" or "Archaeology of Religion". These archaeologies are still characterized by a big divide (Petts 2011: 40–50). They flourish for illiterate societies, in particular prehistoric cultures. In contrast, "world religions" are seen as being characterized by textual traditions. Addressing material culture, archaeology is not seen as getting to the heart of such religions, but rather as as an expression of already-existing and well-defined ideologies. Archaeology is often reduced to and taken for face value. Functional and spatial analysis, analysis of cult images to explain perceptions of deities as well as interpretation of votives as payment for participation in religious rituals have dominated the field of archaeology and historical disciplines using archaeological sources to illustrate points. Thus, the archaeology of belief is reduced to verify dogmatics, important notions of the belief system, in everyday religious cultures, even if they do not any longer restrict themselves to "high culture" like "Christian art" (e.g., Insoll 2001; Steadman 2009). Reconstructing collective systems of symbols (to follow the definition of anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973: 90)) is seen as a substitute for a textual theology.

The primacy of belief against practice and institution has a complicated history in Western scholarship, crossing confessional polemics of Protestant and Catholics with colonial issues of hierarchizing Western and non-Western religion (if present at all in the discourse) (briefly, Orsi 2011). Without denying the importance of discourse and systematic reflection on and in texts, it is not only the material dimension of religious

Figure 1.1 Relief from the Nationalmuseum, Copenhagen, depicting sacrificial scene. The gods are shown larger than the human beings, who are sacrificing. Photo by Rubina Raja.

practice *and* belief which has been underrated. It is above all the local, situational, and individual dimension of religion which has been neglected (balanced: Culley 2008: 67–70). The primacy given to the systematic and the dogmatic is a normative decision. It is a decision to describe religion, as it should be rather than as it is.

There are two ways out of the problem. One group of researchers opts for a scientific approach. They base their claims on cognitive studies and attempt to reach firm ground by starting from "conceptual metaphors" of self and superhuman powers supposedly grounded in universal ways of perception and an evolutionary theory of religion (Whitehouse and Laidlaw 2004; Whitehouse and Martin 2004; several contributions in Whitley and Hays-Gilpin 2008; based on, e.g., Boyer 1994; Whitehouse and McCauley 2005). This way will not be followed in this Companion. Instead, we opt for a cultural and historical approach, lived religion.

Lived Ancient Religion

The concept of "lived religion" has been developed for the description and analysis of contemporary religion, countering the stress on institutionalized religion and its norms (McGuire 2008). Here, it is proposed to employ this concept within the field of archaeology of religion also for past cultures as "lived ancient religion" (see Rüpke 2011). In its application to contemporary social analysis, the concept of lived religion does not address how individuals replicate a set of religious practices and beliefs preconfigured by an institutionalized official religion within their biography – or, conversely, opt out of adhering to tradition. Of course, considering the relationship of individuals to

tradition, such an assumption could in principle work in a religiously pluralistic and a mono-confessional society. Instead, "lived ancient religion" focuses on the actual everyday experience, on practices, expressions, and interactions that could be related to "religion". Such "religion" is understood as a spectrum of experiences, actions, and beliefs and communications hinging on human communication with super-human or even transcendent agent(s), for many, but not all societies conceptualized as "gods". Material symbols, elaborate forms of representation, and ritualization (Bell 1992) are called upon for the success of communication with these addressees. By including such a spectrum of human ways of communicating with super-human or transcendent agents along with an analysis of the role of material culture in this spectrum, a new way of approaching archaeological material is opened.

It is important to keep in mind that such practices are not entirely subjective. For the purposes of historical research, the existence of religious norms, of exemplary official practices, of control mechanisms and enforcement should be taken into account. It is precisely such institutions and norms that tend to predominate in the surviving evidence. The term "appropriation", taken from the French historian Michel De Certeau (1984), plays a key role here. The specific forms of religion-as-lived are barely comprehensible in the absence of specific modes of individual appropriation (to the point of radical asceticism and martyrdom), cultural techniques such as the reading and interpretation of mythical or philosophical texts, rituals, pilgrimages and prayer, and the various media of representation of deities in and out of sanctuaries. The notion of agency is implicit in the notion of appropriation. The methodology suggested by "lived ancient religion" offers a frame for a description of the formative influence of professional providers, of philosophical thinking and intellectual reflections in literary or reconstructed oral form, of social networks and socialization, of lavish performances in public spaces or performances run by associations with recourse to individual conduct in rituals and religious context.

However, the analysis does not merely describe the contrast between norms and practices or the influence of one on the other. What is more, even the intersubjective dimension of religious communication can be accessed through the records of the individuals by enquiring into their communication, their juxtaposition, their sharing of experiences and meaning, their specific usage and selection of culturally available concepts and vocabulary. Thus, meanings constructed by situations rather than coherent individual worldviews should and will be identified. Logical coherence is secondary to the effectiveness of religious practices for the purposes desired ("practical coherence" *pace* McGuire). Instead of aiming at reconstructing a system of belief, lived religion offers the possibility of viewing religion and religious practice as a part of everyday life in Antiquity and discuss in which ways effectiveness was most successfully achieved.

Material Religion

If lived religion is an import into archaeology from religious studies, it is not the only one. "Visible" and finally "material religion" have been perspectives developed within a discipline, which had been dominated by philological approaches (Kippenberg 1990; Lubtchansky and Pouzadoux 2008; Uehlinger 2006; Boivin 2009). Fundamental is the

Figure 1.2 Tondo from the Arch of Constantine in Rome depicting a statue of a god. An altar is placed in front of the statue base. Photo by Jörg Rüpke.

notion that the very construction of gods as super-symbols and communication with them as well as communication among humans and a whole range of related religious practices is not only using, but is shaped by, the very material and sensory basis to these activities. In the course of thinking about the social conditions of ascribing individual agency and about the networks in which individuals are acting, the analogical concept of the agency of things has been developed and also introduced into the field of religion (Latour 1993, 2005; Droogan 2013: 151). "A monument in the landscape, such as a temple, is at once a real solid material thing, a social agent, a support for ideology and a contested site of varying narratives of mythology" (Droogan 2013: 166). Things are not any longer seen as being determined by stable (even if perhaps unavailable to the researcher) meanings, but as elements which are culturally and situationally activated (Morgan 2010: 2011; Raja 2013). By being visible they elicit response (Gaskell 2011: 40).

The material dimension includes the spatial. Archaeologist David Clarke had sketched three levels of spatial dimension which could be easily referred to religious sites: the micro-level of objects and their immediate spatial contexts (often irretrievably lost); the semi-micro level of sites; and the macro-level of spatial relationships between sites (Clarke 1977: 11–7). Space is highly differentiated, being made at times or permanently "sacred" in various degrees, it is moving between actors and related to different areas of cultural activities, political as well as social. As such, space is productive, of meaning, of relationships, of roles (see Tweed 2011 and Chapter 23, this volume).

Material religion and archaeology of religion have integrated theorizing on the body. They have taken the body as an extremely productive metaphor, in particular in the imaginative realm of religion (e.g., Douglas 1973). But starting from the French anthropologist Michel Foucault, they have also taken the body as a place for practices on

Figure 1.3 Relief from Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, depicting an epiphany scene. Photo by Jörg Rüpke.

and with the body (Couzens Hoy 1999; Zito 2011). Embodiment and experience have developed into key concepts in this area. On that basis, Rüpke (2015) suggests to conceptualize religion as the enlargement of the situationally relevant environment beyond the immediately plausible social environment of co-existing human beings (and frequently also animals). This enlargement is practiced in thereby specifically religious forms of agentical action, communication, and formulation of collective and self-identity. What might qualify as "not immediately plausible" is different from culture to culture and even situation to situation and defies universal generalization.

Archaeology of the Ancient World

Archaeology and History of Religion are characterized by their preferences of generalizations of a middle range. It is necessary to theorize, but it is with reference to definable bodies of evidence, for periods and regions of material culture and religious practice, that theorizing is called for. Thus, this Companion is not a handbook for world archaeology (cf. Insoll 2011). The necessity to address the new and growing field of archaeology of religion in the open, but comprehensive format of a Companion is met by a structure touching upon a wide range of themes from a topical approach. This volume aims to give an overview over the extensive amount of topics relating to the archaeology of religion, in particular in the Greco-Roman world. The chapters take their point of departure in concepts, aspects and the empirical material relating to central themes within the archaeology of religion.

For the ancient world, "archaeology of religion" has established itself as a field of interdisciplinary research that presupposes basic methodology on the part of the archaeologists

Figure 1.4 Altar depicting hands signifying worship, prayer or votive to the god who is not named. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Photo by Rubina Raja.

and basic knowledge of the history of religion on the part of ancient historians and scholars of religion during the past decade. As a consequence, a Companion could neither aim to explain archaeological methodology using religion as an example nor to explain the structure of ancient religions concentrating on the relevant archaeological sources. The interest and the difficulties of the field lie in the interpretive problems, i.e., when scholars of various disciplines attempt to relate archaeological evidence to social actions and structures that are specific by being classified as or seen through the lenses of "religion". This companion to the archaeology of religion does not aim at reifying religion, but at understanding the role of objects in cultural practices of constructing religion and encountering and appropriating such a "religion" as objectified representations of the sacred. The concept of "archaeology of religious experience" (which avoids a too-pervasively constructivist perspective) seems to catch this perspective. It serves as a thread pervading all the chapters as an interpretive perspective, that is, a pervasive *problem* of interpretation. Thus, it is not used to exclude any material from consideration or any interpretive perspective (like ritual, organization, gender, power) that proves more fruitful in a given case.

In terms of geographical and chronological range, the chapters cover the whole Mediterranean area including distant Roman provinces, but not systematically from the archaic period down to late antiquity, insofar as Jewish and Christian material is covered as well. At the center stands the aim to cover a wide range of topics, which cannot be covered as comprehensively throughout all periods, but which give crucial and important insight into these topics and offers methodological approaches to the material,

which can be applied in other connections as well. So treatment of material on the color scheme of the Arch of Titus (Fine) may help us to conceptualize in which ways color impacted the ancient viewer in other situations. The treatment of the northern provinces (Woolf) will encourage us to think differently about the eastern and western provinces and give possible other ways of viewing the available archaeological sources.

The chapters are focused on problems of reconstructing religion in the sense of experiences, actions, structures, occasionally beliefs, and offer exemplary case studies and discuss their generalization, thereby employing material from all over the ancient world. However, the Companion is not exhaustive and does not claim to cover all aspects or regions which are relevant.

The Structure of the Companion

The Companion, comprising in total 35 contributions, is structured around the following themes: Archaeology of ritual; Embodiment; Experiences; Creating spaces of experiences; Designing and appropriating sacred space; Sharing public space; Expressiveness; Agents and Transformations. These themes allow for exploration of a wide range of material covering a wide geographical scope as well as a wide chronological span.

The volume aims at developing an appreciation of the different dimensions of religiosity in antiquity as well as room for reflection on the relationship of material evidence and religious practices and beliefs in different perspectives. Furthermore, it relates

Figure 1.5 Funerary portrait of priest from Palmyra. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Photo by Rubina Raja.

features of sanctuaries, instruments and representation to basics such as complex ritual procedures. It is also the aim that the reader should be presented to a broad range of methodological approaches to seemingly intransigent phenomena and that the presuppositions and limits of these approaches will be made explicit. Furthermore, one should be able to acquire knowledge about presentations and analysis of the usage of various sites. Last but least, the volume offers basic information about the most important types of religious localities and institutions which is facilitated by a detailed index.

Methodology

The first section, on the Archaeology of Ritual, addresses various methodological issues and is comprised by four contributions written by scholars coming from various branches of the archaeological and historical disciplines.

Van Andringa's chapter on the archaeology of sanctuaries addresses the extent to which we can access and reconstruct various aspects of ancient religions from the perspective of the society. He gives a broad introduction to central themes which a sanctuary might enlighten us on based mostly on examples from the western part of the Greco-Roman world. He underlines that cult places were defined and modelled by the communities themselves as proper frameworks for religious experiences and not least controlled interactions with the divine. In this respect, before using the archaeological data and questioning the very numerous and scattered pieces of material given by excavations, he highlights that awareness of the nature of the evidence is crucial for further interpretations. Seldom will a sanctuary reveal information about all the aspects which he mentions in his contribution, such as religious practice, rituals, festivals, votives, decoration, cult images and architectural layout (also see Chapter 23, this volume). However, for each of these categories one might, if the circumstances are suitable, be able to find information through the archaeological evidence.

Ritual activities, processions and pilgrimages are the subjects of Luginbühl's contribution in which, through a taxonomic approach, he reveals diverse levels of meaning in a concise manner. He then continues to integrate the results of the taxonomic classification with archaeological findings and methods for identifying and attempting to reconstitute the corporal, physical and sensorial aspects, also known as embodiment. His contribution is organized in three sections, in which he firstly confronts the question of ritual practices in a global manner (excluding funeral rites) by adopting different seriation or classification criteria (functions, community level, sacrality, etc.) and by concentrating on the different types of activities and their physical implications. In the second section, he narrows his focus to processions: their contexts, practical modalities and embodiment. In the third section, he examines "pilgrimages", which are known principally through literary sources but certain examples can be deduced from archaeological and topographical information. The conclusion evokes the potential to be gained through ethnoarchaeological procedures that allow a more exact evaluation of the lacunae in current documentation, a finer analysis of the available information and to confront the question of embodiment among ritual practices in a less theoretical or more practical manner.

Coming from an Egyptological perspective, Weiss tackles issues of perpetuated actions in her contribution. Through a focus on three main strategies of interaction with the otherworldly she suggests a model for religious interaction with the divine in Ancient Egypt. There, the three main foci were: written speech acts; speech acts; and pictorial acts. The primary strategy of approaching the otherworldly, according to Weiss, was by means of the speech act. Though difficult to trace in the archaeological record, indirect evidence indicates the significance of the written speech act. The absence of written speech acts in the archaeological evidence from the domestic sphere would, according to her, confirm that written speech acts were primarily to be found in areas inaccessible for the regular performance of cultic activities, i.e., places inaccessible to living human actors. In the ancient Egyptian context, such inaccessible places were tombs, but also temples that showed the king ideally taking care of the order of the cosmos by means of written speech acts and offerings to the gods, whereas in practice, he was of course represented by the respective priesthood of a given temple. The pictorial act could serve to support the written speech act by showing and thereby enacting the offerings and/or prayers on the stelae. Speech acts accompanying pictorial acts remain less likely since a model offering became a pictorial act only at a later stage, that is, through placement in an inaccessible space where it could perpetually re-enact the act of offering. Such a model as the one Weiss suggests might be able to open for new ways of viewing the various categories of material available to us and to give new insights into ways of approaching archaeological and epigraphic evidence, which sometimes seem to have been much closer linked that we usually take for given.

Parker addresses one of the most pervasive interpretaments in the ancient history of religion, that is, public and private. Paying special attention to phenomena which might be qualified as private, Parker concentrates on the blurring of the lines, on the conceptual problems in keeping the distinction suggested by the pair. Thus, he proposes to use the category of "domestic religion", i.e., rites performed within the individual household, though one should not suppose that the gods worshipped inside houses were unknown outside them, nor that domestic cults were a more important part of the individual's religious life than public rites.

The methodological section of the volume thus deals with concepts of sacred spaces, various ritual and perpetuated actions as well as the concepts of private and public in ancient religion. Through these themes the scene is set for the following sections which delve into these topics in more detail and on the basis of case studies – specific as well as broader conceptual ones. The methodological introductory chapters give insight into how a variety of empirical evidence may support, challenge and refine our views on topics which are all related to the archaeology of religion in Antiquity, when carefully analyzed and discussed.

Embodiment

In the section on embodiment are four chapters which deal with, respectively, amulets, dress and ornament, ritualized movement and issues of gender.

Being a concept which is wide-ranging and not always possible to pin down in ancient contexts, embodiment constitutes a central concept to which scholars of ancient history,

archaeology, and history of religion need to engage with in their endeavors to understand ancient society to a more refined degree. Therefore the incorporation of physical embodiment through objects like amulets as well as dress and ornaments is seen to be just as important as the treatment of subjects such as representations and reception of gender in Antiquity. Objects do not stand alone without the treatment of subjects and viceversa.

Bohak treats the use of amulets in the Greco-Roman world, displaying it on the one hand as a universal phenomenon in human societies from a very early age until today and on the other hand as a phenomenon which is not quite easy to decipher due to the nature of the evidence. For archaeologists, as Bohak states, excavating the remains of people who died long ago means that, whereas some objects may securely be identified as amulets, others are much harder to classify. For example, when we find in a Roman-period grave in a small village in Austria the remains of the body of a young child, and next to it a silver tubular case inside which is a thin sheet of gold on which is inscribed one of the most important verses from the Hebrew Bible, transliterated in Greek letters, one has no doubt that this object must have served as an amulet. However, when one finds in an Early-Byzantine grave in Samaria an inscribed silver amulet in a copper case, as well as a bronze bracelet with a bell, one is less certain about the nature of the second object. It could easily have served as an amulet, but could just as easily have been a piece of jewelry.

In such situations lies the ambiguity and difficulties in interpretation of objects – as well as most likely the multiple meanings of such objects. What may have served for one purpose in a certain situation may have served another purpose in another situation. Its appeal lies in our assumptions that certain objects have the power to protect, heal, or assist those who carry them, and from the general human need of health, protection, and success. However, the nature of the objects used, the manner of their use, the assumptions as to why they possess such powers, and the identity of their producers and users, vary greatly from one human society to the next and even among specific individuals in any human society, which are important points to keep in mind when dealing with such objects. Amulets seem to have been an extremely common feature of the Greco-Roman world; they were used by people from every societal layer and for many different purposes. Some were produced by common people for their own use and others were produced by experts who served their clients for a fee, or by religious entrepreneurs in search of new followers. Some were extremely durable, and survived in great numbers, whilst others were far more fragile, and decomposed long ago, with only one or two specimens, or none at all, available in our archaeological records. And yet, whenever we can compare the archaeological and the literary remains of the Greco-Roman world we can see that, when used cautiously, both types of sources complement each other in offering a remarkably detailed image of the use of amulets in the Greco-Roman world. Nonetheless, as also showed by this contribution, amulets are not a topic which has been exhaustively researched as yet.

Gawlinski treats another topic which deals with a core theme and much understudied topic of ancient religion – namely dress, dress fashion and ornaments. While the ranges of priestly dress vary greatly throughout the Greco-Roman world and throughout time there is no doubt that this was of central importance to the representation of the religious representatives and therefore also to the recipients of the various religious situations/actions. Whereas we might speak of dress codes for certain deities as well as for

certain priesthoods, we might also speak of cults for which we do not have any evidence that dress codes played a large role. How come that this seemed more important in some cults than in others? Or perhaps, rather, why was it underlined in the representations of some cults rather than others? We know that dress and ornaments played a large role in ancient society. Much recent research has testified to this – both in "secular" and "religious" contexts. However, in many contexts we still do not comprehend exactly how these mechanisms of understanding, encoding and decoding functioned. In some cases, it is clear that the simple clothing, unclothing, wrapping and rewrapping of the deity itself was a central element in the cult. In other cases, it is unclear to which extent the priestly dresses played a role in the rituals of the cults, although they are represented as being set apart from other participants' clothing in religious situations. Gawlinski's contribution draws attention to these tensions in how to read clothing and dressing in ritual situations, which truly is a topic that has not been exhaustively researched.

The subject of Naerebout's contribution is embodied ritual. He focuses on bodily movements performed within a religious context and in particular dance. His point of departure is that all religious ritualized behavior is an instance of embodiment and that such behavior is performed by humans, which *do* ritual with their bodies. Therefore the corporeality of ritual is an important part of its efficacy. Bodies performing will have a certain appearance, including the ways in which they are dressed, they take up a position in space relative to their surroundings and to other bodies, and are in movement – gesturing, posturing, travelling through space: the most important components of what is called nonverbal behavior. All religious rituals, he argues, include the nonverbal. He addresses the evidence, but also the lack of evidence for dance in ancient society. His conclusion stresses that we can say quite a lot about the position of dance (singular) in society, and its functions within a ritual context, but that we cannot speak about dances (plural), let alone the actual realizations of such dances in performance. He goes as far as to conclude that we might have to realize that there are no dances to know, but only individual performances – which are completely beyond our grasp (unless an image would commemorate a specific performance and a specific performer). Importantly, his contribution points to the difficulties in generalizing on the basis of evidence connected with specific situations, which remain a basic problem when dealing with archaeological evidence.

Varhelyi's contribution deals with the matter of gender in Antiquity – a topic which has received much attention over the last decades. Nonetheless, she manages to pinpoint how gender may not at all have been viewed through the lens which would be most helpful for scholars of Antiquity – namely through its seemingly extremely varied nature – just like religion – which differs, changes and might even be fluid in specific situations. She underlines the argument that gender may not be a useful *pre-established* category of analysis in historical studies, which has recently been put forward by Boydston, who has argued that "there is no social subject whose experience is solely constructed through the processes of gender (however we define gender) [...] even an identity as male or female is in constant and inseparable interplay with other processes of status and identity" (Boydston 2008: 576). On this view, how gender functions will be distinct in varied cultures or at different times as well as that it will always be enacted in relation to other social distinctions. Such a perspective forces us to question, at the outset of our studies, how our notion of "gender" may relate to the societies we study. This is an important observation as far too often modern conceptions of themes, topics and conceptions are imposed on

ancient material. Here Greco-Roman Antiquity offers the opportunity to view such concepts with more refinement than in many other cases and this should be taken seriously.

Experiences

This section of the Companion consists of seven contributions dealing with various aspects of experiences in religion in the ancient world. Ranging from watching rituals to how water was used to create certain experiences, this section aims at substantializing the basic fact that experiencing through the senses was an essential part of ancient religion. In many ways, defining and discussing experiences is one direct way of accessing ancient Greco-Roman religion and rituals based upon our knowledge of them as situational-focused (experience focused). In the section on experiences, scholars deal with explicit empirical material in order to establish ways of interpreting and understanding various situational meanings which may sometimes have covered more than one occasion and even been extended in place or space. The chapters of this section generally deal with case studies in order to give the reader insight into the particular situations in which these various experiences were brought into play. Furthermore, they deal mostly with material from either the East or West of Italy. This is due on the one hand to the rich nature of the material which does not allow for a comprehensive treatment of all aspects of these issues and, on the other, to the importance of giving insight into particular situations through the treatment of particular situations in the acknowledgment that experiences were nonstatic situations created in specific moments in time.

Fine examines in which ways polychromy in the ancient world might have impacted the individual in various situations relating to rituals. He deals with the notion of color in the depiction of Jewish paraphernalia in non-Jewish contexts, in particular the Arch of Titus in Rome which commemorated the Roman triumph over Judaea. He rightly reminds us of the fact that Antiquity by far was not colorless, and that this fact is an important one to observe when dealing with religion and rituals in the ancient world. The impact of color could change the experience of a certain space at a certain point in time and we need to remind ourselves that cult statues, temples, and temene were decorated with colors and other materials (precious stone, for example) as well as various motives which could have supported the experience which one had in a certain setting.

Huet's contribution addresses rituals and their impact on the participants in the various situations in which these took place. Furthermore, just as importantly, she addresses issues dealing with the various groups and individuals involved in rituals, both as participants and as spectators. In this way she brings to the front of our minds aspects of ancient rituals which are not usually central when rituals and their meanings and impacts are discussed, namely the way in which rituals were used as a means of communication in ancient society. Huet argues that watching rituals in Antiquity was about claiming a place in Roman society, thereby also displaying various degrees and types of hierarchy, identity and belongings. One of her arguments is that we cannot separate the experience of watching a ritual from experiences of hearing, smelling, touching and tasting, which went along with rituals in Roman religion. In this way, the spectator got an almost actively engaging role in any ritual he or she watched even if he or she was not central to the ritual. She also rightly brings up the issue of visibility or rituals when one was not at

the core of the group (standing close by or one of the participants/performers) watching gestures at public sacrifices. Therefore, Huet argues that one way for the ancient viewer to have understood how rituals functioned and what they involved included watching and reading the many representations of rituals in stone, in particular reliefs. The gestures and acts encountered on these, she argues, are not merely representations but in some ways are also manuals for understanding situations, gestures and meanings.

Animal sacrifices were a central element to Greco-Roman ritual and Méniel focuses on various aspects of animal sacrifice ranging from the selection of animals to the deposition of the animal bones. The contribution highlights not only the importance of the animal sacrifice for its ritual purposes, but also indeed the very practical circumstances which had to be taken into consideration, such as places for the sacrifice, preparation of the meat from the dead animal and deposition of the animal bones. It makes very clear that animal sacrifice – apart from holding an important ritual position in ancient society – also held a very practical function which was related to everyday concerns and that, although taking place in sacred environments, had to be dealt with in a practical way. Furthermore, it highlights the absolute crucial point, which is the danger involved in the slaughtering of animals and the therefore desired divine or sacred protection of the sacrifice as such.

Marten's chapter follows upon Méniel's contribution well in that it deals with the sacred meal, the banqueting, which in many cases took place on some scale after a ritual animal sacrifice had taken place in a sanctuary. Martens points out that a united perspective would not have existed in the vast and dynamic territory of the Roman Empire. Today, we prefer to see Greco-Roman banqueting as dynamic and variable events, where each specific case had singular properties. However, feasting, including banqueting, holds cultural universal elements and has been described by anthropologists as unique human behavior. The system of communal dining may have originated already during the Upper Palaeolithic period; however, it appears to have become more widespread only during Mesolithic and subsequent food-producing periods. Also in later periods, up till now, centrality of the feast in human gatherings extends far beyond special occasions and the marking of important life events. Banqueting in religious and ritual settings played a central role in ancient Greco-Roman religion and many sanctuaries bear witness to having hosted such events on various occasions – more or less frequently. Furthermore, banquets were in many cases also the focus of the meetings of smaller cult groups, such as those worshipping Mithras, who met in smaller sanctuaries. Banquets may be interpreted both as instances of controlling the offerings made (the animal sacrifices) as well as controlling social settings (who was allowed to take part in the in feasting). Therefore, again an ambiguity in the situation might be detected, which pertains to the fact that religion, ritual and everyday life in some instances was difficult or not even necessary or desirable to differ between in Greco-Roman Antiquity. We may here speak of a certain degree of entanglement such as introduced by Hodder in his recent monograph on the subject (2012).

Water as a central element in Greco-Roman religion is surveyed by De Cazanove who categorizes its use in three different groups: purification of the body; purification of the cult places (and cult images); and spring sanctuaries. Water held a pivotal role in Greco-Roman cults for various numbers of reasons; one crucial one was the element of cleanliness and purification. Water installation may therefore be found in most sanctuaries or in connection with most sanctuaries from the regions of the Greco-Roman world. For the

experience of both the visitor and the cult personnel, water was also important and the ways in which water was treated in sanctuaries and incorporated into architectural layouts testify to this importance. De Cazanove exemplifies this through his case study of the sanctuary of Apollon Moritasgus at Alesia.

Temporary deprivation is the topic of Gordon's chapter, defining it in a way which allows focus upon a selection of different ways in which the natural body could be used to generate subjective religious meanings in Greco-Roman antiquity. "Temporary", in his definition, denotes a period that may be short or relatively long, but by definition of a different order from permanent or semi-permanent deprivations for religious ends, such as life-long abstentions (notably virginity, or the food-, and even naming-, taboos imposed on the *Flamen Dialis* at Rome), long-term ascetic practices such as Christian anachoritism, protracted beggary and vagrancy, emasculation, infibulation and other forms of permanent mutilation. His chapter is structured around these themes: boundary marking; fasting and other forms of self-denial; initiation; the endangered body. His overview of and insight into the material gives the impression that this topic has yet to be taken up by scholarship and he highlights important issues which must be considered. Furthermore, his contribution also shows that in order to begin to deal with this material one needs a firm grip of the available evidence.

Creating Spaces of Experience

The section on spaces of experience does not exclusively deal with what may be termed "sacred space". This section also deals with ambiguous spaces or spaces which could change meaning according to the point in time or according to users/producers of the space. All too often, spaces of experience in religious contexts are limited to looking only at the traditional "sacred spaces" such as temples, sanctuaries, shrines, churches, synagogues and mosques. However, when looking at the content of this section it becomes absolutely obvious that many other spaces were spaces in which experiences that had to do with religion, religious rituals and experiences connected to such situations.

Religious experience in the ancient home has, as Bowes states, often been termed "private" religion. However, the tendency to label ancient domestic religion "private" presents considerable problems. Ancient houses were not "private" in the modern sense of the word at all but permeable to all kinds of non-family persons while, conversely, the "public" religion of temple, synagogue and church affected domestic practices in complex ways. In most of the periods considered in Bowes' chapter, textual information on domestic practices has been considered over material remains, in many cases reinforcing the notion of a public/private binary. Bowes deals with aspects of religion and religious experiences in the spaces which we may term "domestic" for the lack of a better word and in opposition to public spaces. She analyzes in which ways religious experiences were intentionally created in these spaces through the elements which were either incorporated into the architecture or were movable. She examines through which means such experiences were staged and how they might have impacted the participant at various points in time and how complex reality was in this sphere that was not private in the modern sense of the word.

The chapter by Neudecker covers the topic of gardens as spaces of religious and sacred experiences. He deals with the layout and implications that such layouts could have had in a variety of situations – both intentionally created and less intentional. He speaks of "sacred idyll" as a concept of allusions to religious settings and situations. Central to the concept of "sacred idyll" he also addresses the topics of obligations and even juridical rules for how to upkeep sacredness in, among other things, controlled natural settings. The religious implicitness of nature is another theme which Neudecker also takes into consideration, basing his observations on literary sources. Throughout the chapter he brings together, through both thematic sections as well as sections involving case studies, aspects that are important for our understanding of how nature, and not the least nature under control, played a crucial role in various religious settings in the ancient world.

Hesberg, Nowak, and Thiermann give an overview of various burial customs and interpretations of these. They span the period from the eighth century BCE to the High Imperial period, which allows an insight into the changing patterns and some of the reasons which were agents in these processes of change. Among other things, they examine changes in patterns of belief and, in particular, belief in an afterlife as well as rituals connected to the cult of the dead. However, prominently in the chapter stands the argument that graves were media for the communication of societal ideas about the structural relations between the living and the dead, the present and the afterlife as well as the representation of the community ideals of how to commemorate and stage the deceased.

Designing and Appropriating Sacred Space

This section is comprised of four chapters that all treat various ways and ideas of how to design and appropriate space in specific cultic and religious contexts. Furthermore, the focus of the chapters are the ways in which these spaces influenced and shaped the religious experiences of the involved actors, performers and participants.

Jensen's chapter concerns the archaeological remains pertaining to early Christian baptism rites which, although sharing some elements with certain Greco-Roman rites of initiation and cleansing, also was unique in central respects. Until recently, historians of Christian liturgy have relied primarily if not exclusively on evidence drawn from written sources such as sermons, treatises, and descriptions of or instructions for actual practices. However, the archaeological evidence for these rites has not been wholly taken into consideration until recently. While these purpose-built structures provided discrete and functional shelters for the early Christian ritual, their overall plan and décor conveyed baptism's religious purposes and shaped its actual practice. In other words, the basic design elements of light, space, orientation, focus, and form created more than a context for ritual performance. These elements also influenced how baptism's actions were accomplished and how the participants experienced them. Furthermore, because the ritual was enacted within a local context or physical setting, it also was influenced by sensory elements that were particular to that place. Thus, archaeology plays an important role in assessing the performance and meaning of the rite at a certain time or place.

Kindt's contribution on oracular shrines considers what it might have been like to visit an oracle in the ancient world. She does this through not only considering the conventional and very well-known oracular sanctuaries such as that of Apollo at Delphi, but also takes into consideration the many smaller and not that well-published oracular sanctuaries across Greece and Italy. Until relatively recently, as she states, the picture of the great oracular institutions of the Greco-Roman world sketched in classical scholarship was based almost exclusively on the literary evidence. The archaeological remains of these smaller oracular shrines received little attention beyond specialist archaeological studies. She argues that the selective use of evidence is unfortunate because the archaeological evidence presents a rich picture of these shrines that complements, and occasionally even challenges, that of the literary. What the epigraphic evidence reveals rather well is the rules and conventions surrounding a visit to a given oracular shrine. Literary evidence hardly tells us anything about the day-to-day administration of such sanctuaries. Therefore archaeology presents an important material group through which we might analyze religious experiences in these oracular sanctuaries, which held a central role both in Greek and Roman religion.

Building of religious communities stand at the center of the chapter by Nielsen, who argues that membership of and in religious groups required specific rites. Initiations in Antiquity related to changes of status or levels of expertise involving more intentionality and commitment on the part of the initiated. Such religious associations were primarily an urban phenomenon of the cosmopolitan Hellenistic and Roman periods. They were private in the sense that they were independent of the city and the state, but they could be closely related to a sanctuary of their deity. The contexts for initiations, assemblies and sacred banquets for religious communities varied greatly and were dependent on numerous variables including cult, type of association, economy, chronology and region, which is one aspect that she examines in her analysis of the buildings of religious groups. There were specific similarities in all cult buildings, she argues, namely a hall of some kind with seats and a chapel or the like for the god in question. The structures belonging to religious associations placed outside a public sanctuary often belonged to private houses, which were first only little changed. When independent structures serving the associations are found, they were often different depending not so much on the functions they served, which were very similar, as on the size, the location and the money at the disposal of the group. Throughout her chapter she brings out both similarities and differences in ways of configuring cult buildings belonging to specific groups.

Arnhold's chapter on small sanctuaries in Ostia and their meaning within the urban space of the city seeks to explain a possible way to understand and integrate the so-called small sanctuaries into the religious landscape of the Roman Imperial city. Her main line of enquiry is not only to re-evaluate the differing roles of single cult sites within urban life, but rather to examine how urban space was shared and acquired both in and through sanctuaries and how it consequentially was conceptualized. Many studies based their selection of sites for investigation on the identification as *sacra publica* and *sacra privata* and, as Arnhold rightly points out, both terms often lack precise definition; even when understood correctly, they are not suitable for all contexts. Thus, the differentiation in *sacra publica* and *sacra privata* does not give any information about the accessibility of a sanctuary, the status of the cult adherents, or the function of the cult. Through

architectural analyses she shows how the smaller sanctuaries in fact were not to be overlooked in the urban landscape, but could figure as prominent features and suggests that they may have played a much more central role in the urban life of Ostia than earlier thought, and created ways of sharing urban space in a different way.

Sharing Public Space

This section is comprised of five contributions that deal with central concepts and spaces in the Roman city. Complex sanctuaries, temple interiors, theaters, processions and ways of creating spaces of remembrance in the Roman city are dealt with in the contributions.

Raja argues that complex sanctuaries in a traditional sense may have conformed to ideas and ideals about architectural design and decoration for a large part across the Roman Empire. However, through case studies she shows that what we may term traditional sacred complex spaces in fact were compiled by a series of elements, which could vary to a large extent. These spaces, the sanctuaries, might at first sight look strikingly similar to each other in architectural layout and plans, but when looking at the details they turn out to be quite different from each other. On the one hand, generic layouts and architecture in the Roman period made sure that the viewer could orient themselves within these spaces and would know instantly that they were approaching or were in a sanctuary. However, they would not necessarily be able to tell from the layout or the architecture what sort of sanctuary they were in or to whom the sanctuary was dedicated. These messages were conveyed through other means such as decoration and inscriptions, as well as the active parts of the cult, involving rituals and processions. The chapter shows how diverse these experiences could in fact be although the spaces conformed in many cases and were planned on something which can be termed as a canonical plan or a traditional sanctuary layout. Raja argues that through various architectural differences we might be able to trace a variety of ways to stage religious experiences.

Hesberg's chapter on temple interiors through case studies underlines the impact which these spaces had on the viewers, the participants and the performers of the cult. Through a number of case studies spanning both Greece and Italy and beyond as well as the period between the eighth century BCE and Late Antiquity, Hesberg argues that Greek and Roman cult images acquired their qualities through their interaction with their worshipers in the cult but, on the other hand, it is also clear that they had an aesthetic or semantic quality of their own. An enormous variety of forms are found, both of images and ways of venerating, which markedly contrast with Egyptian and Oriental traditions and with later Christian forms. This variety emerges as an expression of the concept of divinity in Greek and Roman culture. The main room in a temple or sacred building usually contained a cult image, which in turn was publicly worshipped. The tension between space and image, which mainly exists between the participants in the cult and the idea of the numinous within the cult image, starts at the boundaries of the sanctuary and not with the interior of the temple. However, the numinosity of a temple interior was not only created by visual perception, but involved a number of senses, such as the smell of burning incense or acoustic signals. Moreover, the acts of worship that took place in its context included acts of ritual performance, which brought together the revered, temple staff and the public. A temple interior was thus a complex

phenomenon with many different aspects, some of which may be examined through archaeological evidence.

Gödde's chapter on ancient theaters shows that throughout Antiquity, Greek and later Roman periods, theater was closely tied to religious practice due to its integration into religious festivals and its spatial proximity to temples and altars. Whereas in classical Athens the performances of tragedies, comedies, and satyr plays had been restricted to the cult of Dionysus, this exclusivity gradually dissolved, with the result that plays could, especially in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, also be performed at festivals in honor of other gods. Performances, masked and dramatic, were integrated into festivals of gods throughout Antiquity, not only because drama was considered sacred action, as she shows, but rather because festivals also provided a suitable festive frame that attracted a large audience, which to a Greek or Roman mind certainly included the gods. Furthermore, festivals of the gods expressed the politico-religious self-understanding of the celebrating cities, to which the theater made substantial contributions. Her case study-based look at the connections between cult and drama, religion and theater in Greco-Roman Antiquity, from archaic Athens to the Roman Empire, reveals a remarkably high degree of continuity in the institution itself as a setting for performances, which held complex societal and religious implications.

Processions are the topic of Stavrianopoulou's chapter. Since we know from ancient texts that processions were central to ancient religion and were ways of creating spaces of experience, this theme is absolutely crucial to cover when looking at spaces of experience. Through processions, a "moment" in time was created which could turn any space that a procession moved through into a sacred space – this goes for streets, open spaces and spaces not usually connected with sacred situations. Processions are difficult and in most cases impossible to grasp archaeologically, but Stavrianopoulou's chapter contextualizes the sources which we have for processions in their original archaeological contexts, thereby creating one axis upon which we are able to approach the concept of processions. Processions were constituent feature of different societies and historical periods. Nonetheless, they were also dynamic elements, which Stavrianopoulou underlines to have been shaped through and by the bodily performance of their participants in a specific time and space and therefore are culturally and historically contingent. Processions, when defined as ritual events creating and mediating interpersonal communication, unfold their full potential in the interplay between actors and spectators as well as that between staging instructions and experienced performance. Understanding the relationship between processions and their (spatial and medial) settings not only sheds light on their meaning and function, but also allows us to trace changes and adaptations in their message over time. Stavrianopoulou's chapter and the chapter by Huet complement each other in the way that watching ritual in some cases may be viewed as a key to interpreting processions and ritual actions taking place over time.

Smith's chapter on urbanization and memory treats a number of topics which are central to the ways in which memory was constructed, upheld and changed in the ancient city. With a point of departure in specific case studies taken from the city of Rome, Smith shows how that, for the most part, the persistence of the *sacra,* the presence and visibility of the priests, the city as spectacle may have been sufficiently reassuring, although the rise of individual votive offerings and the persistence of mystery and ecstatic cults suggests a need for something more. He argues that collective memory may better be sought

amongst the recursivity of repeated sacrifice or the sense of how things should be done that could lead to the repetition of festivals, or the desire to memorialize achievements through a temple foundation. Cultural memory relates better to the deeper stories of foundation and redemption. Neither determines any lack of change, and we should not assume that either operated at a high degree of specificity, except for the elite. The transition from Republic to empire, which was a point of transformation for what it was to be a Roman, the interruptions and challenges to shared memory in a city which was being transformed, may have made memory more important and contested. Within the context of the religion of the city, as seen in archaeology, the instrumentalization of religion can be seen in the Augustan fascination with origins and the deep past, but this may only be a part of the story. Further use of memory as an explanatory or heuristic tool in ancient history needs to remain fully alive to its theoretical ambivalence, and temporal instability, which makes it a useful way of emphasizing the potential for change even in allegedly changeless rituals, and a challenge to locate the creation and preservation (or loss) of memory in specific urban and social constructions.

Expressiveness

Three contributions make up the section on expressiveness, a concept which balances the notion of experience, both seen as being based on an active role of the individual. The chapters focus on religious instruments and vessels, anatomical *ex votos* and monumental inscriptions.

The sacrifice and the instruments and vessels involved in this action stand at the center of Siebert's chapter. The act of giving a gift to the gods was one focal element in a sequence of complex ritual acts, including prayers, processions, music and communal banqueting in Roman religion. In Roman culture, the sacrifice was an omnipresent and routine act that could require a large number of instruments of sacrificial and cultic nature as well as religious experts, priests and performers, who knew how to handle these instruments. Sacrifices were performed in the house and at temples, at festivals celebrating events in the lives of individuals and families, on occasion of political and military actions, or out of gratitude for, for example, one's recovery from an illness or for a smooth journey. Siebert gives an introduction to a number of vessels and instruments and their function in the ritual acts. She does so through the analysis of sacrifices on images, such as reliefs and scenes displayed on a number of items which were in circulation, such as cups and plaques. She shows in which ways these vessels and instruments used in the ritual acts were important to understand in order to be able to decode the message of the ritual acts. Therefore the depictions of them in themselves also hold messages about the function of sacrifices and ritual acts in Roman religion.

Anatomical *ex votos*, depictions of body parts used as votives, are treated in Schörner's contribution to the Companion. He describes how a visitor to a sanctuary might have seen a large number of reliefs depicting faces, eyes, ears, feet, arms, hands, buttocks and female breasts and pelvises and how this experience may have made impressions important for the religious experience in the sanctuary. Although many of these were naturalistic in appearance so that they hold great expressiveness, evoking the idea of body care and healing in a modern biomedical sense, the meanings of them are not clear. Schörner

questions and explains in which contexts these body part votives were used and what they communicate about ancient religious rituals and thought. Body part votives or anatomical *ex votos* are an ill-defined group of votive offerings. Fundamental in order to label a votive as a body part votive is that they were found in a sacral context, mainly in sanctuaries, and that they form part of the human body (for animal body part reliefs see below) in a more or less naturalistic manner. In common use all representations of limbs, of external and internal genitalia, and of viscera are named as body part votives. Despite these seemingly clear-cut conditions the classification remains ambiguous in many cases.

All these approaches are eligible but should be integrated in a web regarding rituals, dedications and health care and healing procedures. It should be questioned which role body part votives played in the more basic conception, that body, disease and cure are all socially constructed. Schörner addresses several of these various approaches and shows how the mere existence of body part votives allows no conclusions about how health care or fertility rituals were performed because they only attest the need for divine help. In which way this help was invoked is beyond our interpretational possibilities, but setting out the questions and problems is one way of avoiding the pitfalls of this category of material evidence.

Votive monuments differ in nature from other votive gifts as their purpose was not to serve the sacrifice itself but rather to commemorate a ceremony. Although they could be part of a sacrifice, they also had the purpose of indicating a sacred action to gods and men, which should remain in the forefront of the mind of any viewer. Such monuments include in particular votive inscriptions, which were found in Greece from eighth century BCE onwards and at Rome from the sixth century BCE, but appeared in large numbers from the Hellenistic period onwards and at Rome from the early imperial era. The latter is particularly true for the western Roman provinces, where the earliest religious inscriptions dating to the Augustan period are found. For the period from 150 to 250 CE an almost explosive increase in votive inscriptions took place, particularly in the Roman provinces. Spickermann analyzes this development in his contribution and concludes that it was due to the economic prosperity of the second century CE. The phenomenon corresponds with the so-called "epigraphic habit" coined by MacMullen and which is observed all over the Roman world in the second and third centuries CE. The chapter is mainly concerned with the Latin monumental votive inscriptions. The votive inscriptions in Greece developed differently and peaked during the Roman Empire, particularly in Asia Minor. The dedication of votive monuments with inscriptions in all cults was a public act of social relevance, Spickermann explains. This required, apart from the financial means of the donator, adoption of the new language (Latin) and culture (Roman). In turn, this meant that the epigraphic form of consecration also had the purpose to document and to increase the social prestige of the donator in his community. Outside of Rome and Greece, this phenomenon was first practiced by high officials, soldiers and members of latinized or hellenized provincial elites, but it increasingly found more and more imitators in economically potent circles, especially in the provinces. The greatest density of the find spots of votive inscriptions is wherever soldiers were stationed. Spickermann highlights many crucial factors pertaining to this phenomenon, including the issue of literacy in ancient societies and visibility of the inscriptions, showing their central importance to the religious life in urban settings in the Roman period.

Agents

In the section on Agents, three chapters give their take on various aspects of how religious identities, individuality, groups and communities may or may not be discerned in archaeological evidence and in which ways we can approach material evidence in order to understand issues of identity formation and expressions.

Rebillard's contribution is a case study of the ways in which material culture has been used in order to establish a "Christian archaeology". He brings into play newer studies which are critical of the earlier confidence that a discernable "Christian" material culture exists and can be archaeologically defined. These new studies bring into focus the degree to which religious affiliation is reflected in the material record, and highlight the problems and misleading quality of pagan/Jewish/Christian categorization. Along this line of enquiry, Rebillard questions the link between material culture and religious identity, proposing a set of theoretical considerations that can help formulate the question on better grounds by situating religious identity within the "plural actor". He also analyzes some of the failings of the traditional approaches, particularly within "Christian" archaeology, in order to suggest a new set of questions. At the heart of his theoretical considerations stands the criticism by Rogers Brubaker of "groupism"; the program devised by Bernard Lahire of "a sociology at the level of the individual"; and the vocabulary provided by identity theory for understanding the handling of multiple identities. He suggests that instead of seeking to identify religious affiliations, we need to understand the processes of religious self-identification. Material culture provides a body of evidence more closely related to the everyday social experience of individuals than texts usually do, leaving aside a few narrative sources. Thus, as he concludes, an archaeology of "lived religion" should try to understand when religion matters in everyday life and to look for contexts in which religion might be at work.

The contribution by Rüpke focuses on the role of the individual, in particular the role of the individual for the distinction of "individual" and "society" within the cultural phenomenon which is addressed as "religion" in this volume. As he rightly states, the archaeology of religion has rarely used approaches in which the individual stands at the center, when not in a central role. This is surprising as religion represents a central instrument of individuation by individual prayer, vows or confessing methods in many cultures. Much of the archaeological evidence of religion from Mediterranean antiquity has been produced in the course or in reflection of individual religious action, such as sacrifice, the offering of votives to the gods and the construction of sacred spaces. Religious individuality becomes clear in the "sources", which we use, through evidence for durable institutionalizations, but also as a media of communication. Rüpke's chapter points to chances and problems with an approach within the archaeology of religion, which makes use of "individualization" and "individuality", because such concepts, although being useful, have also been heavily used as stereotypes of auto-description and ascription by others today and in the history of scholarship.

Imagined communities is the topic of Mol and Verschluys' contribution, which underlines, in the words of Scheid, "that without doing there is no faith – without ritual no group, no community, no belonging". Here ritual and process stand at the center. Furthermore, both authors underline the centrality of material culture as a constituent in the making of religion and religious ritual. Whereas this may be the case in the

Greco-Roman world, other cultures may have dealt differently with religious rituals. In their discussion of community or group construction they especially put emphasis on the importance and difference between the meaning and agency of material culture. From the point of departure in material from the Mithras cult and that of Isis they demonstrate various ways in which community building was undertaken.

Transformations

Transformations in a large-scale perspective are the theme with which the two last contributions are concerned. They both look at regional changes outside the core area of the Roman empire, respectively the northern provinces and North Africa. Through combining the bird's eye view with case studies, careful consideration is given to ways in which generalizations may or not be made about material culture in a religious setting.

Woolf's contribution is on the ritual traditions of non-Mediterranean Europe. Late prehistoric societies of temperate Europe shared a broad set of ritual traditions. Until recently, these were known largely through accounts provided by first Greek and Roman and later Christian outsiders which emphasized elements they found exotic and interpreted ritual in terms derived from their own societies. Woolf's chapter is based largely on archaeological evidence of cultic acts, most of which took place within domestic and funerary contexts in societies that were largely decentralized and lacked extensive monumental landscapes, in this way standing very much in contrast to the Greco-Roman world. Most characteristic are rituals that resulted in the deposition of elaborate assemblages of human and animal skeletal material and/or metalwork, especially weapons and coinage. A small number of sacred places have been identified where similar rituals took place, perhaps in combination with feasting. Rare items with rich iconography hint at elaborate cosmological and mythological beliefs but they are largely inaccessible to us today. The limitations of the textual evidence from these regions mean that archaeology provides by far the best evidence for ritual and cosmology among the northern peoples and Woolf introduces a string of case studies which all give insight into various interpretations of ritual and possible relationships between groups, individuals, ritual and belief. However, it remains difficult on the basis of archaeology to be certain about how ritual activity in fact related to belief. Woolf highlights the even more difficult task of linking these practices with the cosmologies attributed to various northern peoples by classical and Christian writers. It would be bizarre if there were no continuities between Iron Age practice and the ways in which their religious world views were translated in Antiquity and the middle ages. These issues are also some which scholars working on the Near East are struggling with (Blömer, Lichtenberger, and Raja, forthcoming). All the same, the energy devoted to the Roman translation of prehistoric deities into familiarized hybrids reminds us of the enduring hold of these deities on the imagination and of the great gap there was to be bridged between the religious traditions of the Mediterranean world and those of temperate Europe.

Gasparini's chapter, Tracing Religious Change in Roman North Africa, takes as a given that ancient North Africa cannot be treated as a monolithic block. Its history was closely linked to its Mediterranean shores, whose coastline reached a length of almost five thousand kilometers from eastern Libya to the Atlantic Ocean, thus representing a sort of "bridge" connecting the East to the West. Several factors shaping the local cultural

networks changed significantly over time and according to regions. Local traditions may have had nothing to do with each other from one end of the coast line to the other. Gasparini highlights the ways in which geography, topology and landscape also marked the limits and underlines that there were no sharp frontiers marking off the wide area which comprised Roman North Africa. The coast line, which was exposed to and involved in a very intense movement of goods, people, ideas and cults, constituted, from this point of view, a link more than a boundary. Even the southern Roman *limes* has to be interpreted as an elastic zone of local contacts, exchanges, interactions and, sometimes, clashes, rather than a clear dividing line. Finally, inside of the extensive territory, the population was the complex result of a rich stratification of ethnic and cultural layers. Through selected case studies, Gasparini analyzes and discusses religious change and continuity in this vast region, offering new ways of approaching the material.

Conclusion

The 35 contributions cover a wide range of topics and material. Together, if not giving an overview, then they at least make an attempt at giving insight into areas of research and study which provide crucial information about the religion and ritual practice in Antiquity. They tackle all the complex issues which are inherent in these aspects, such as the question of group formation and the role of the individual in everyday religious life and lived ancient religion, which in many ways should stand at the center of any study on ancient religion in Antiquity. With this Companion, we hope to give students, scholars and interested readers an opportunity to discover new ways of engaging with material culture and archaeological evidence through careful consideration to detail and case studies shedding light on various aspects and periods in Antiquity.

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PART I

Archaeology of Ritual

CHAPTER 2

The Archaeology of Ancient Sanctuaries

William Van Andringa

In using the concept of lived religion for an investigation of ancient religions, the archaeology of sanctuaries is certainly central. Cult places were indeed defined and modeled by the communities as proper frameworks for religious experiences and controlled interactions with the divine. In this respect, before using the archaeological data and questioning the very numerous and scattered pieces of material given by excavations, we have to be aware of what kind of evidence can give the archaeological investigation of an ancient cult place. A meticulous study of old as well as more recent publications of sanctuaries permits us to answer the question simply: a lot, as well as very little. Very little, for it would be difficult to reconstruct the habits of the sanctuary visitors, the elaborate construction of a rite or the meaning of a cult (every cult has a specific meaning and a particular identity for the community which celebrates it) from the material remains of a temple or an altar, or the sparse fragments of bones or pottery, whatever the conditions of the excavations or the state of conservation of the archaeological levels. And even more so, since in many cases we do not know to which god the temple was built, and we know next to nothing about the community using the sanctuary, the town, the college, the village, the family or the neighborhood. This is true not only in Antiquity. Archaeology, especially in the case of societies which are little, or not at all, documented in written sources, does not give us a direct link to religious practices in the symbolic and supranatural spheres.

Archaeology of sanctuaries can nonetheless, and we see that every day, increase our knowledge of ancient religions, as long as the perspective is well defined and the adopted methodology is compatible with the material evidence of religious character (from monumental architecture to small remains left over from banquets or sacrifices). The quality of the results, the reconstruction of religious practices and the cult places depend first and foremost on the quality of the ground survey and the interdisciplinary character of the analysis to which an ever-increasing number of specialists contribute. Today, the

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Figure 2.1 Excavating, recording: reconstructing religious experiences from archaeological material. Photo by Antoine Gailliot.

development of stratigraphical archaeology and sciences applied to modern archaeology (ceramology, zooarchaeology, carpology, anthropology, pedology, etc.) leads to results which increase the scope of observations we can make on material remains from cult practices if, and that is important, they are integrated into the framework of interpretation given by the history of ancient religions (see Van Andringa et al. 2013a, 2013b). Such an investigation aims at giving the sanctuaries a wider definition than just their architecture, because temples are more than their architecture (see Chapter 24), and sometimes a cult place has no architectural structure at all (see Chapter 24): the organization of the space and its limits, and of the cult equipment, as well as the treatment of sacrificial remains defined the specific religious language that each community built for its own gods, case by case. Does not the definition of rites begin with a specific construction of the space where they take place? Such a perspective, which aims at giving sense to the space and equipment at thousands of cult places, excavated more or less everywhere around the Mediterranean, gives rise to archaeological questions in several fields dealt with in this chapter. I will first follow the typical history of a sanctuary in its three phases of foundation, evolution, and abandonment, before I turn to the details of architecture, sculpture, decoration and local myths. Finally, the activities of sanctuaries will be addressed (see also Chapter 3) (Figure 2.1).

The Foundation and the Communal Context of the Cult Place

When was a sanctuary founded? Does the date of the foundation correspond to any particular political development in the founding community? The close parallel between the foundation of Greek sanctuaries and the emergence of the Greek city-state immediately springs to mind in the example of Eretria and other cult places (De Polignac 1995).

Less well known is the recently-discovered development of certain Celtic regions. The foundation in the third century BCE of a public cult by the Bellovaci at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Northern Gaul comes at a time of a decisive political development in their tiny Celtic state (Brunaux 1988). Thousands of bovine bone fragments found in the trenches that border the sanctuary point at communal sacrifices, which evidently played a role in the structuring of society. At Corent, the township of the Arvernes, a great wooden enclosure is the scene of sacrifices and public banquets from the second century BCE. Again, the foundation of the cult place, wholly original in its design, points at some form of social change (Poux and Demierre, forthcoming). The enormous consumption of Italian wine during the ceremonies – as evidenced by the thousands of Italian amphorae spread on the ground of the sanctuary – can be explained by the introduction of a new social rite, organized by the local élite, under the patronage of the Avernes gods. Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that the local deity, honored with ample doses of wine, took on a new identity in the framework of a specific architecture, invented for the occasion.

What, then, can be said about the choice of sites for the installation of tutelary gods? Sanctuaries are sometimes founded near a natural feature (a spring, lake, outcrop, cave, etc.). In fact, we know that there were two kinds of sanctuary, at least in the Greek and Roman worlds: the natural sanctuaries, where the god inhabited a natural feature, and the built sanctuaries, organized by men according to a specific set of rules. In most instances, the natural sanctuaries also had some form of temple and religious equipment, as well as structures of hospitality, as in the case of the Roman *hospitalia*. The example of the spring of Clitumnus is famous from Pliny's account, one of the most beautiful descriptions of a sanctuary which survive from the Roman period (Pliny, *Letters* 8.8.5–6; see below). At Le Mans-Vindunum, belonging to the Aulerci Cenomani in Gallia Lugdunensis, a recent excavation in the suburbs of the town has uncovered the remains of a sacred lake. On the sand bordering the pond there was a chapel that without doubt housed a statue of the deity of the brook. During three centuries, the inhabitants of the nearby town had thrown coins, rings, fibulae and folded lead plaques (with *sortes* written on them?) into the sacred lake (Chevet et al. forthcoming). The practice reminds us of the coins thrown into the spring at Clitumnus which, according to Pliny, shone at the bottom of the water.

In a polytheistic religion, there are as many temples as there are settlements, be it in the country or in towns. We have stopped counting the cult places found in the territories of Greek and Roman cities and only have to turn to Pausanias, whose books let us discover a multitude of sanctuaries, often presented as showcases of the local mythology and thus of the heritage of the Greek city states. As for the origin and development of the religious landscape, we must admit that the choice of location was not always linked to an ancestral occupation of the site by the local deity, as in the case of the temple at the city of Viromandui (Gallia Belgica), near Nesle in Northern Gaul, recently unearthed with remains from a temple consecrated to Apollo Vatumarus. The Gallic name does not, in this case, reveal a pre-Roman origin of the cult: excavations have shown that the temple was built in Roman times, in the first century CE, and that the name was no more than a local qualification, indicating that the powers of the deity were specific to the region. Apollo of Nesle is in fact the son of Asclepius, as is shown by the wooden anatomical *ex-votos* found in a nearby well shaft (Cocu et al. 2013).

In the city, cult places were just as common, located in every house or shop, at every crossroads and in each neighborhood. The mix of cult places and public monuments in

the agora of Athens is a good example of the gods' influence on public life and political aspirations in the city. At Pompeii, a dozen or so sanctuaries give structure to the city's public areas: the forum and the theatre quarter (Van Andringa 2009). We should remember that, in a Greek and Roman context, the public sanctuary is not defined by the plot where it stands, nor by the founder or dedicator, who could be the city or a citizen, but by the status of the cult as defined by the community. At Rome, distinction was made by antiquarians between cults celebrated *pro populo*, in the name of the people, and private cults, celebrated *pro singulis hominibus*, *familiis*, *gentibus*, for individuals, families and clans (Festus p. 284.18–21 Lindsay).

The context of the foundation often had a strong link to the political situation of the moment, as in the case of the temple of Fortuna Augusta at Pompeii. This pseudo-peripteral (with a portico in front of engaged columns along the side and rear walls of the *cella*) Corinthian temple in marble was built in the last decade BCE by an eminent member of the local aristocracy, Marcus Tullius, at an important crossroads north of the forum. The choice of location, with the altar situated next to the street, a public space, could not be understood without paying attention to another important crossroads in the city. Here, a four-sided arch, bridging the street, was built at exactly the same time by another member of the local élite, Marcus Holconius Rufus, likely benefactor of the monument, which incorporated a series of statues in which Rufus himself appeared. The example shows that the founding of cults in the Augustan period depended on two conditions: personal strategy and aristocratic competition. These behaviors should be understood as a direct consequence of the political changes at Rome. The essential questions of the choice of location for the cult depend on a careful examination of the archaeological context at the cult places, essential for describing the organization of the cult place and defining the community that regulated the cult (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 The temple of Fortuna Augusta at Pompeii: the context of the foundation has a strong link to the political situation of Augustan era. Photo by Johannes Laiho.

The Evolution of Cult Places: Equipment, Restorations and Cult Changes

Recent excavations can determine phases at cult places, sometimes by ten or twenty years, making it possible to follow the transformation of a sanctuary in detail. Firstly, the question of permanence at the cult places should be discussed case by case. Cult places, rather than being memorials of tradition, are memorials for the history of the communities and have not been left untouched by great changes within such communities. However, traces of two superimposed cult places do not automatically prove a perfect continuity of cult; we know that tradition is reconstructed and reinvented continuously. To begin with, we must ask about the very nature of the structures which have been discovered, as when a Greek temple has been built in perishable material on an apsidal foundation or when a provincial Roman temple is erected within enclosure for public banqueting, where the wine flows aplenty, as at Corent of the Averni in Gallia Aquitania. Cult places are in fact subject to continuous transformations; this becomes logical from the moment we realize that the evolution of religious practices rewrite, in a precise way, by the redefinition of the space and the rites, changes in the population that frequents the sanctuary. In Greece, the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria has an impressive longevity with changes which can be directly linked to changes in the cult practice. For Roman cities in the provinces, it has been accepted that the development of city-states centered on urbanized towns according to the Roman model had a direct influence on the organization of the local communities and the cult places. These transformations have not, of course, followed a universal rule. Evidence for that is the extreme variation in the structure of sanctuaries throughout the Gallic provinces. In the provinces of the Roman empire, an important stage was without doubt the monumentalization of cult places, at various dates according to the site, shall we say between Claudius (reigned 41–54) and the end of the first century CE, showing that the sanctuaries by then were considered as essential elements in the organized space of the city, in the specific context of public organization of cults.

Then another fundamental question presents itself, concerning the interpretations of the restoration and extension of temples and their surroundings. Were restorations carried out only in order to stop erosion of the monuments? Or do we have to understand the reuse of a sanctuary as a determining intervention in the evolution of a cult or the community? At Pompeii, very close to the city, a Doric temple consecrated to Dionysus/Loufir (at S. Abbondio) was erected during the third century BCE. The reuse of the site at the imperial time, after a period of little attendance, was not a simple restoration of the site; it was accompanied by the installation of a thiasos, a cult association, in the sanctuary, modifying its very aspect since the colonnade of the pronaos was closed by masonry walls with two banqueting rooms built in front of the temple. The beautification of a temple could be initiated by the piety of a notable, within the context of aristocratic competition, as we have seen in the case of the temple of Fortuna Augusta at Pompeii. The extension of a cult place by incorporating additional features (altar, theater, baths, etc.) could also mean an enrichment of the cult which permits inevitably an enrichment of the religious experiences. This was the case at Delos, when Apollo's sacred city was given a theater in the third century BCE, enclosed by a massive sustaining wall of great blocks of white marble. At Palestrina-Praeneste in Latium, the spectacular

monumentalization of the temple of Fortuna Primigenia at the end of the second century BCE transformed the at least two centuries old site completely. Such an intervention changed both the features of the site and the cult itself. When, rarely, the written sources permit us to study the evolution of a cult, the changes attested at the cult places constitute valuable evidence, which it is essential to understand and to interpret.

The Abandonment and Destruction of Sanctuaries: The End of the Gods

Sometimes the written sources inform us about cults falling out of use. At least, that is what Augustus wants us to believe when he has certain cults restored which, according to him, were no longer honored. However, the sources are largely silent on the matter, whereas archaeology can give us detailed information about the end of sanctuaries. Thus emerges what will become a new chapter in the history of ancient cults. Recent excavations show that some large civic sanctuaries were destroyed before official Christianization began under Constantine. It is without doubt still too early fully to comprehend the phenomenon (maybe in this case related to regional situations), but the destruction of the immense portico complex at Chartres-Autricum in Gallia Lugdunensis (over two-hundred meters long), presumably associated with a suburban sanctuary, corresponds to a carefully planned program by the local authorities in the second half of the third century CE. The same phenomenon has been found at the great sanctuary of Vieil-Evreux of the Aulerci Eburovices (Gallia Lugdunensis), where recent archaeology has uncovered evidence for a stone-by-stone destruction and, perhaps, ritual desacralization of the religious features (Bazin 2013; Guyard, Fontaine, and Bertaudière 2012). Likewise. we should explain why, from the second half of the third century CE, some urban or suburban temples are left abandoned outside the new city wall, for example as at Avenches and Rennes. Elsewhere, frenzied sacrificial activity (sacrifices and banquets) brought to light at a rural cult place during a specific period, the second half of the second century CE, has a very probable link to the inhabitant of the nearby villa. Even so, the cult place, which had been maintained from the beginning of the Imperial period, was abandoned during the course of the third century. One should not forget that, following the example given by Pliny of the temple of Ceres situated on his land, a large number of cult places established on city territories were administered by the great local owner:

> In compliance with the advice of the haruspices, I intend to repair and enlarge the temple of Ceres, which stands upon my estate. It is indeed not only very ancient, but small, considering how thronged it is upon a certain anniversary. On the 13th of September, great numbers of people from all the country round assemble there, many affairs are transacted, and many vows paid and offered; but there is no shelter hard by against rain or sun. I imagine then, I shall do at once an act of piety and munificence, if at the same time that I rebuild the temple on the noblest scale, I add to it a spacious portico; the first for the service of the Goddess, the other for the use of the people. (Pliny, *Letters* 9.39)

Clearly, the piety of Pliny was central in the maintenance of activity in this little sanctuary located on his Italian estate. In any case, these few examples, which could be easily multiplied,

show that archaeological documentation allows us to modify the often-advanced model of a progressive abandonment of polytheistic cults during the fourth century AD under the pressure of anti-pagan laws.

Definition and Organization of Cult Places: Architecture, Sculpture, Decoration and Local Myths

First, *sanctuary architecture*. This subject has for a long time dominated the debate on archaeology of sanctuaries, from the evolution of the Greek orders of architecture to the Hellenization of sacred architecture in the Western Mediterranean. Beginning in the archaic period, sanctuaries adopted a monumental, almost systematic, aspect linked to the enrichment and development of local societies. The moment a cult place became a monument or a work of art, the study of the architectural remains or the sculpture contributes important information about the mythological universe of the deity in question and about the cultural influences which have formed the cult at each location.

A subject for long-term discussion has been the architectural choices dominating the phases of integration in the Roman provinces. What motivates a choice of architecture? Most of all, how does one interpret the architectural adaptations specific to each society in a period of evolution? Between the conservation of a building, which increased the venerable character of a cult, and its reconstruction according to the tastes of the moment, which was the dominating argument? How can one explain architectural innovations – by the evolution of the cult practice or by a public, i.e. political, transformation? A good example is the type of temple called *Romano-Celtic* in English, *Gallo-römisch* in German and *fanum* by the French. It has long been thought that this architectural type, known from the decoration on a vase (Sains-du-Nord in the land of the Nervii) with a central tower housing the cult statue, surrounded by an open or closed portico, had its origin in the Celtic world conquered by Rome (Van Andringa 2000). But no Celtic cult place excavated to date – fifty or so sites – has revealed such a plan. The opposing argument is that the date of this type of building should be Augustan. At this stage of research, with so far no archaeological evidence of a Celtic origin, the birth of this particular type of architecture should be found in the political and religious changes of the Augustan era. Innovation is not incompatible with polytheistic religion. And these innovations in architecture would of course have affected the liturgy and the everyday religious experiences of people visiting the sanctuaries.

Another question is the construction phase of religious buildings. Meant to house one or more deities, the temple was first of all a space separated from the domain of humans and from any commercial transactions. Sacred meant properly belonging to the god. At Rome, certain rules of consecration, validated by public law, were observed during the construction of a temple, sometimes, albeit rarely, leaving archaeological traces, as for instance the foundation deposit. At Arras-Nemetacum, territory of the Atrebates in Gallia Belgica, the foundation of a chapel to the Mater Magna was the occasion of the deposition within the masonry of a box containing pure mercury, a rite recalling the re-foundation of the Capitolium at Rome in the Flavian era. Raw metals

were, according to Tacitus, thrown into the foundation trenches (Tacitus, *History* 4.53): "A shower of gold and silver and of virgin ores, never smelted in any furnace, but in their natural state, was thrown everywhere in the foundations. The haruspices had warned against the profanation of the work by the use of stone or gold intended for any other purpose." Even if archaeological evidence of these foundation and consecration rites (in any case difficult to define) is rare, more evidence is available for the phases of the building site and architectural choices. The building site of a temple was also a monumental edifice, which needed specific administration by the community, especially in urban areas.

Second, *decorations.* According to Cicero (*Against Verres* 4.48-52), when Verres put his hand on the venerable statues decorating the temple of Ceres at Enna, he provoked the anger of the inhabitants who accused him of having defiled the deity's power of action (*numen*), the venerable character of the rites (*sacra*) and the religious character (*religio*) of the sanctuary. Decorations, statues, and furniture given by the founders and the devotees clearly accumulate at the cult place, progressively creating the *religio* of the site. One may think of such unusual objects as the cup of Nestor and the elephant's skull in the famous temple of Diana Tifatina at Capua, possibly spoils from the Punic Wars. The great variety of objects of all sizes, *ex-votos* and other types of offerings, clearly serves as an illustration of the importance of decorations and offerings for the definition of the *religio* of each cult place.

Third, *images and cult statues in the sanctuaries.* The study of cult images, for a long time part of history of art, now takes into consideration the identity given to the cult by the responsible community. What was the aspect of the cult statue erected as a representation of the deity's power of action? This is how Pliny describes the statue of the deity at the spring of Clitumnus (*Letters* 8.8.5): "near it is a primitive and holy temple [*templum priscum et religiosum*], wherein stands the river-god Clitumnus clothed in a toga praetexta." The nature and position of the statues in the cult places are other important elements for the understanding of the cult. In principle, the deity giving its name to the sanctuary resided in the main temple. In polytheistic sanctuaries, the main deity was often accompanied by associate deities, which could share the principal altar or have their own altars, as in the temple of Apollo at Pompeii where two secondary altars were erected in the courtyard. Every sanctuary investigation should try to recreate the associations giving meaning to the cult. In particular, the question is whether or not the character of the associations of the gods under investigation is local.

The status of the deities displayed in the sanctuaries should be questioned. Certain images of gods were offerings made to the patron deity; others had an official place in the cult. The combinations presented in the sanctuaries played an important role in the local definition of each cult. A thousand Apollos, a thousand Jupiters, a thousand Venuses, but the variety of the combinations expressed in the sanctuaries by the statues displayed shows that the gods adopted a different identity from one place to another, from one sanctuary to another. It is thus that one can explain, for example, the omnipresence of Venus in the majority of Pompeian sanctuaries. As the patron deity of the city, she was the main figure in local mythology and as such forged privileged relationships with the other gods of the city. Thus the presence of her image in the majority of both public and private sanctuaries can be explained.

The Activity of Sanctuaries: Sacrifices, Celebrations and Participation

For any activity, a fundamental constraint is given by the *architectural configuration of the cult place* (temple, altar, gallery, portico, additional chapel, precinct wall, possibly baths and performance area) and the ritual implementations of the representation and use of the space. An excavation reveals remains of buildings and equipment, which form part of the organization of religious practices and also give meaning to the social representations of ancient communities. That is to say that the spatial organization of cult places plays a main role in the organization and the reality of religious experience. It is therefore crucial to locate the temple of the deity in question and to study its interior arrangements. The location of the altar is also the focal point of sacrifices celebrated in the sanctuary. The investigation of porticoes and courtyards, which give structure to the sanctuaries, can be crucial in the recreation of the religious activities of the worshippers visiting the local deity. Just as important are the identification and localization of the cultic equipment, which brings us to consider the liturgical circulation in the interior of the sanctuaries (cult statue and cult images, altar, offering tables, water basin, storage area, kitchen, benches, money chest, etc.).

Among the arrangements characteristic of religious practices, particular attention should be paid to banqueting halls and kitchens. In the sanctuary of Demeter at Corinth, archaeologists have revealed a banqueting complex allowing the gathering of numerous participants, brought together at feasts in small dining rooms. Some layers have even revealed remains that allow us to reconstruct the menu served at Demeter's table. If sacrificial practice involved the rite of dividing the parts between gods and men as well as the consumption of the sacrificed meat, the excavation of sanctuaries sometimes contributes complementary information, as for what has been called "the sacrificial kitchen." At Pompeii, it has been noted that most cult places did not have a kitchen, proof that most of the sacrificed meat, once declared profane, was distributed or sold outside the sanctuary, in a structure which was perfectly adapted for such a use such as the public market hall (*macellum)*. Finally, the only sanctuaries that were equipped with a kitchen were those that received the functionaries charged with maintaining the cult or groups of worshippers, who one could qualify as *cultores*: the *Isiaci* of Isis, the *ministri Fortunæ Augustæ*, or the *Venerii* of Venus. This question naturally makes us recall a part of the history of sanctuaries, which is seldom mentioned in the written sources and only recently taken into account by archaeologists: sacrifice and its pertaining rites.

Which *sacrificial traces and offerings* do we find in the sanctuaries? Until recently, the religious remains that were studied were limited to terracotta figurines discovered in backfills and some stratified deposits. However, there are many more traces of every type which we can add to the body of evidence, for example animal bones, found in sanctuary contexts, which give us information on species, age and sex of the sacrificed animals. Let us remember, however, that a single bone fragment found in a sanctuary does not attest a sacrifice. In the temple of Dionysus/Loufir (S. Abbondio) at Pompeii, excavations have discovered only a few bone fragments from construction fills and occupation layers. The poor state of preservation of these bones gives little hope of identifying the animals sacrificed to Dionysus. On the other hand, the bones from the sanctuary of Uley in

England (Woodward and Leach 1993) have made it possible to identify the animals (mainly goats) sacrificed to Mercury at this territorial sanctuary in the province of Britannia. It is also possible to determine the periods of slaughter, making it possible to estimate the number of animals heading for the altar. In a lot of sanctuaries, the excavation of specific contexts with animal bones, especially pits with remains of sacrifice and banqueting, document in a vivid way the sacrificial activities. The study of animal bones and vegetal remains thus enriches our understanding of the ritual proceedings in the sanctuaries. A recent investigation of ritual deposits at Pompeii, mainly from houses, revealed very different assemblages from one pit to the other, proof that the ceremonies followed rites that were different at each time (Van Andringa 2011). This could be seen as an example of the multiple religious individual constructions allowed by polytheism. It is likely then that the most consistent and normative rituals were those organized in the great public sanctuaries. The accounts by the Arval Brethren at Rome are a good illustration of that.

The same diversity concerns the myriad types of offerings, figurines, personal objects, miniature attributes of the deity and other objects deposited in the sanctuaries (Veyne 1983). The variety of these mostly terracotta figurines is so large that it is prudent not to take them into account, even if they can be decisive for the identification of the gods of the sanctuary or the nature of the cult. Let us in passing note the importance of the context where the offerings were found: dispersed in backfill layers (and thus deconsecrated), intentionally left around the altar, as in the area nearby the temple of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria (Huber 2003; Verdan 2013), or in pits dug expressly for their preservation.

Conclusion

The wealth of testimonies from ancient sanctuaries shows that they were more than places for religious practice. Far from being fixed by tradition, they were dynamic places, continuously redecorated and restored, modified by the offerings given, frequented for the sacrifices and visits to the gods, sometimes also abandoned. While the written sources give us momentary images of the life in the sanctuaries, archaeology can give us information about the evolution of the cult places, the construction of local *religio* and the structure of rituals. In fact, sanctuaries are a good point from which to evaluate the complexity and the richness of "lived religion" from the everyday experiences to the interactions with gods.

Guide to Further Reading

There are very few recent archaeological handbooks on the subject except Insoll (2011). An overview on cult places in the Roman World is given by MacMullen (1981), the evolution of Greek sanctuaries is discussed by Alcock and Osborne (1994) and Pedley (2005), Gaulish sanctuaries are presented by Arcelin and Brunaux (2003); on cult places in Central Italy, Coarelli (1987) is the book to start with. An approach of Roman provincial temples is given by Derks (1998) and Van Andringa (2002). Detailed studies and recent discoveries mentioned in this chapter can be found in the Journal *Gallia*

(published by CNRS editions, Paris). For recent researches on Pompeii, see Van Andringa (2009) and the detailed methodology exposed in Van Andringa et al. (2013a, 2013b). Among the numerous monographs on sanctuaries, Renfrew (1985) and Woodward and Leach (1993) are perhaps the most complete.

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CHAPTER 3

Ritual Activities, Processions and Pilgrimages

Thierry Luginbühl

Introduction

Ritual activities, processions and pilgrimages in Antiquity comprise an immense field of study. By attempting to apply an hierarchical classification scheme to the broad variety of types of ritual activities, processions and religiously motivated voyages, a taxonomic approach can reveal diverse levels of meaning in a concise manner. The results of the taxonomic classification can then be integrated with archaeological findings and methods for identifying and attempting to reconstitute the corporal, physical and sensorial aspects (embodiment).

The first section in this chapter confronts the question of ritual practices in a global manner (whilst excluding funeral rites) by adopting different seriation or classification criteria (functions, community level, sacrality, etc.) and by concentrating on the different types of activities and their physical implications. The second section narrows the focus on processions: their contexts, practical modalities and embodiment. The third section concerns "pilgrimages", which are known principally through literary sources but certain examples can be deduced from archaeological and topographical information. The conclusion evokes the potential to be gained through ethnoarchaeological procedures that allow a more exact evaluation of the lacunae in current documentation, a finer analysis of the available information and to confront the question of embodiment among ritual practices in a less theoretical or more practical manner.

The Rites: Taxonomic Procedures

The concept of "rite" or of "ritual" is not discussed in depth since the definition has been well established by a large consensus (Bell 1992, 1997; Scheid 2002: 29–38 and 71–93, 2005; Hocart 2005; Obadia 2007: 70–7). Nevertheless, it would be useful to

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

keep in mind that a rite, as understood here, can be defined as a practice with a religious nature, or at least influenced by religion, and characterized by well-defined objectives (but potentially differing according to each participant) and following a precise protocol dictated by oral or written tradition. The vast and complex subject of the religious practices of the ancient populations, for whom orthopraxy, or the "proper execution of the rites", was considered the principal obligation towards the gods, can only be discovered through a taxonomic methodology and, ultimately, by refining the descriptions of the indications of the types of activities and intentions that can be identified through archaeological methods or archaeometric analysis. "Understanding through classification" could be an adage for archaeology, but how it is possible to seriate practices that are as varied in their forms as in their objectives? We cannot know how the ancient populations organized their rituals, but diverse indications provided by literary sources and ethnographic comparisons (notably with Hinduism) permits speculation that they would have been allocated in function of the divinities to whom they were addressed or by seasons, following the calendrical order of festivals. These two criteria, the divinity and the date, are too related to specific cultures to constitute the basis for an "absolute" seriation of antique cultic practices, which could only be founded on their "common denominators" and thus on their fractional elements of comparable programs such as function, community level, degree of sacrality and degree of visibility. Though necessary for the comprehension of ritual practices, the definition of their objectives is often difficult, even impossible, to determine from strictly archaeological findings, but may rely on literary sources and, to a lesser part, on epigraphic sources which attest to about twenty reasons or categories of motivations for the origin of ancient rituals (Table 3.1).

The community levels (see Table 3.2) had great importance in the polytheistic religions of Antiquity, among which individuals had to practice only the rites of the communities to which they belonged. A citizen of a Greek city, for example, could not participate in rites of another city but, as a member of the Greek community, could be summoned for rituals at the important Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries like Delphos or Olympia. These

Table 3.1 Classification of rites by objective or by function. Created by Thierry Luginbühl.

Propitiatory	Delimitation
Votive (contractual)	Union
Purification	Alliance
Therapeutic	Taking into possession
Apotropaic	Perpetuation
Statutory	Gratification
Commemorative	Benediction
Initiation	Reparation
Expiatory	Execration
Divinatory	Misappropriation
Inauguration	Enchantment
Consecration	Subservience
De-consecration	Vengeance

Note: a single rite may have several objectives or functions (for example: purification, therapeutic and apotropaic).

Table 3.2 Classification by community level and geographical area. Created by Thierry Luginbühl.

Community level	Geographical area
Individual	House
Couple	Farm
Family	Hamlet
Clan	Village
Group of families	Urban center
Social class	City territory
Tribe	Region
Nation	Province
Ethnic group	Group of provinces
City	Federated territories
Inhabitants of a federated territory	Kingdom
Inhabitants of a kingdom	Empire
Inhabitants of an empire	Unlimited area
Members of an autonomous religion	
Everyone wanting	

Categories are divisible into three gender subgroups: masculine, feminine and mixed. Age-based categories can also be defined.

levels of the population in question naturally played a fundamental role in the development of religion's territory, monument construction and attendance frequency. At the same time, a single location could be host to ritual practices concerning variable community levels. A sanctuary could attract enormous numbers of people from the region or even supra-regional, in the case of important festivals, while lesser ceremonies were followed only by the local population. Additionally, some rituals in official sacred places were performed in the private sphere, either among the family or as an individual.

The ritual practices of the populations in Antiquity can be classified according to other criteria such as subject matter (spiritual, political, judicial, military, commercial, artisanal, agro-pastoral or domestic); by the level of religious authority or Sacred Law (empire, province, city, guild…); by degree of visibility (public, discreet, secret); by frequency (daily, weekly, yearly, biannual…); and by symbolic type (rituals linked to water, fire, woodlands, etc.). This wide range of diverse taxonomic categories should not be regarded as an archaeologist's folly for obsessive classification, but rather as the unique method for understanding and defining the different aspects of ritual (objective, community level, area, sacrality…). In spite of the reductionist aspect and ephemeral data categories, these classifications allow a multilevel analysis of the archaeological findings and, as we shall see, offer innovative viewpoints for a precise discernment of archaeological artefacts and sites.

Rites, Activity and Embodiment

The context and function of the rituals discussed above consist of different types of activities found in various forms among the majority of the Antique civilizations, including those with monotheistic religions. In Table 3.3, a classification of more than 120 types of activities are

Table 3.3 Classification of action types. Created by Thierry Luginbühl.

Speech, sound and music
Invocation
Curse
Declamation
Story
Revelation
Shouting
Weeping
Spitting
Chant
Musical performance

Movements and gestures
Codified gestures
Genuflexion
Prostration
Squatting
Lying down
Walking
Procession
Circumambulation
Transport of a liturgical object
Foot race
Jumping
Jumping over
Escalade
Crawling
Sliding
Swimming
Diving
Bearing
Pulling
Pushing
Dancing
Mime
Simulation of combat
Escape
Chasing
Trance
Contortions
Skilled demonstrations
Tournament

Irrecoverable offering to a divinity
Burial
Deposition on the ground
Deposition on the water
Thrown in the air
Thrown in the water
Aspersion
Dispersion
Exposition
Suspension
Display
Immersion
Cremation
Destruction
Complete sacrifice
Voluntary mutilation
Ritual suicide

Utilitarian gifts
Monetary gift
Gift in kind
Gift of services
Construction
Maintenance
Renovation
Embellishment
Commensality sacrifice
Combat to the death (ritualised)
Acquisition of goods or services

Gifts to humans or to animals
Hierarchical gift from upper to lower level
Hierarchical gift from lower to upper level
Single gift between peers
Exchange of gifts between peers
Liberation, disenfranchisement
Feeding animals
Releasing wild animals

Purification, cleaning
Aspersion
Ablution
Bath
Friction, scraping
Massage
Unction
Sweeping
Washing
Put in order
Smoking
Burning of incense
Fasting
Circumcision
Mummification

Consummation
Preparation of foodstuffs
Meals
Banquet
Preparation of drink

Consummation of drink
Intoxication
Ingestion of narcotics
Inhalation of incense
Inhalation of narcotics
Endo-cannibalism
Exo-cannibalism

Clothing and body ornaments
Preparation of equipment
Dressing
Undressing
Coiffure
Jewellery
Body painting
Tattooing
Piercing
Scarification
Binding

Breakage and beating
Deterioration
Destruction
Combat
Hunting
Flagellation, caning
Mutilation
Torture
Death

Sexual practices
Ritual intercourse
Sacred prostitution
Erotic games
Orgies

Non-physical actions
Observing
Listening
Silent prayer
Thinking
Day dreaming
Meditation
Vision quest
Awaiting divine messages
Ecstasy
Sleeping
Dreaming (incubation)
Waiting
Abstinence

proposed, attested by literary sources, iconographical representations or archaeological findings from Antiquity and occidental Prehistory. The seriation begins with the practices associated with speech, sound and music. These are followed by activities comprised of transit or movement; walking to the sacred site, processions, circumambulation around an effigy, the sacred area or the city, sporting events, sacred jousts, dances, trances, etc.

The rites of offerings have been divided into two groups: irrecoverable offerings (Latin: *sacra*), given to the god for his sole benefice, and utilitarian gifts (*dona*), conferred to the priests for maintenance of the sanctuaries and performing ceremonies. The practice of giving irrecoverable offerings can be separated into fifteen types by the kind of physical action taken (burial, display, cremation, etc.) while the offerings themselves could vary infinitely (foodstuffs, garments, weapons, money…). A complete blood sacrifice, of the holocaust type in which the entire victim was offered to the deity, can be included in this group, encompassing also human sacrifices as practiced by various northern cultures (Scythes, Thracians, Celts, Germanic tribes…), but also at Carthage (child sacrifice) and even at Rome, until the second century BCE, in the case of a serious crisis (Greek and Gaulish couples buried alive in the *Forum Boarium*).

Utilitarian gifts or offerings were employed only in the framework of a consistently operating cult that was served by officials or accepted representatives. These offerings could have been accomplished in different ways: by monetary donations placed in

offering boxes or given directly to the priests, by gifts in kind and services: corn, firewood, maintenance work. Also included are voluntary contributions (eurgetism) for financing construction, renovation or refurbishments. Commensally shared sacrifices, in which the blood and entrails were offered to the deity while the meat was shared among participants, are included in this category of practises. More frequent than the *holocaust* type of sacrifice in ancient civilizations, commensally shared offerings featured in sacred banquets (Latin: *epula*) that played a primordial role in the functioning of the cultic site.

In addition to offerings to divinities, ritualized gifting among persons is attested in all cultures, either in an hierarchical context or within a social class/family circle. Hierarchical gift exchange can take two forms, from the upper ranks to those below or from lower ranks to upper, the former having great importance in all ancient civilizations. Often ritualized, the redistribution of the acquired riches of elites to members of the lower classes through banquets, gifts in kind or monetary donations, is illustrated by innumerable examples, from the royal prodigality of Agamemnon to the meagre *sportula* given each morning by a Roman *patronus* to his clients. Essential to the wellbeing of ancient societies, these practices are equally well attested among the Near East and Middle Orient civilizations, the northern cultures and particularly among the Celtic territories where the rulers were obliged to prove their generosity. Strabo (*Geography* 4.2.3) and Posidonios (*Athen* 4.37.1–19) mention the impressive banquets offered by the Arvernian king Luernios to his subordinates in the second century BCE. The validity of these statements has been recently confirmed by excavations at the *oppidum* at Corent (France), which had to have been one of the principle cities in his territory. The archaeological excavation of the sacred precinct, contemporary with his reign, produced important quantities of bones from animals that had been butchered, cooked and eaten on site, plus the remains of innumerable Italian wine amphorae (Poux 2012).

Hierarchical gifting procedures from lower ranks to upper ones are not as well documented, except for the Levant (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia) where the representations of kings receiving processions of porters carrying offerings played an important role in the iconography of power. Less ritualized than in the Occident, this practice existed as a form of taxation and labour duty that could be viewed as a type of utilitarian offering to the kingdom's divinities. Gifts or exchange of presents between members of the same social class or the same family could take place during different types of rituals related to lifetime events (birth, birthdays, weddings) or during annual celebrations such as the Roman *Saturnalia*.

Seriation methods were applied to the different types of activities related to the purification of the ritual's participants and to the types of cleansing rituals for the cult location such as ablutions, baths, sweeping, etc., and actions associated with the practice of fumigation or burning incense, fasting with the objective of purification, circumcision and mummification. Activities directly linked to sacrifices related to food and liquid consumption were examined and included periphery type practices such as inhalation of incense, ingestion of narcotics, alcohol and other psychotropic substances, and endo- and exocannibalism (consummation of the flesh of members of the same community or of a foreign community). Widely spread among the Americas, Oceania, certain regions in Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, anthropophagy was strongly tabooed in the ancient Mediterranean civilisations and considered as a "curse" in the Judaic tradition (*Leviticus* 26.29). The sole examples of cannibalism identified as ritualistic were the rites among the Minoans and the Hittites. Nevertheless, different forms of cannibalism are mentioned

(notably by Herodotus) or archaeologically attested among different northern cultural groups as the Thracians, the Scythians, the Massagetes, the Sarmatians and, perhaps, among the Celtic populations.

After an inventory of the actions in relation to clothing and bodily ornamentation (wearing special clothing, hairstyles, jewellery, tattoos, etc.), classification continued with violent actions, blows and breakage, which can be introduced for different reasons and at different moments in the ritual practices. The deterioration or intentional destruction of an object or a structure, the death of an animal or of a human being, are here considered as an action in itself, regardless of the motivation (propitiatory, votive, etc.) or the type of offering ritual in which it is used. The seriation continues with the sexual practices integrated or linked to ritual activity, followed by non-physical actions such as observation of a liturgy, flight of birds, listening to invocations, rustling leaves, silent prayer and the search for visions or divine messages, notably in incubation rites for producing revelations during sleep, recorded in Egypt, Ancient Greece and Italy, as well as in the Roman provinces.

Though difficult to determine from material remains, the physical and sensory implications of the different types of the previously-mentioned practices could have their essential characteristics deduced through practical experimentation or observation of ethnographic events. The first point to be raised is that the greater part of these rituals necessitates a considerable personal and/or communal effort, which for most religions is considered as the primordial form of an offering. These efforts can be primarily physical, taking the form of difficult journeys such as ascending slopes or mountains, long voyages, processions, prostrations or dances, but also intellectual challenges of memorization and recitation of long chants, or meditation and economic hardships in the form of irrecoverable offerings, utilitarian offerings, gifts, and eurgetism. Certain of these practices implied different forms of suffering (circumcision, mutilation, tattooing), as well as violence as exercised on the sacrificial victims, but also judicial or initiatory rites. In Antiquity, fear and death were certainly innate to some ritual practices but pleasure was far from being excluded: the enjoyment of being purified in clear water and dressing in ceremonial costumes, attending sacrifices, spectacles or tournaments, participating in banquets, but also the feeling of belonging to a community, or the opposite, entering in direct and personal contact with a divinity.

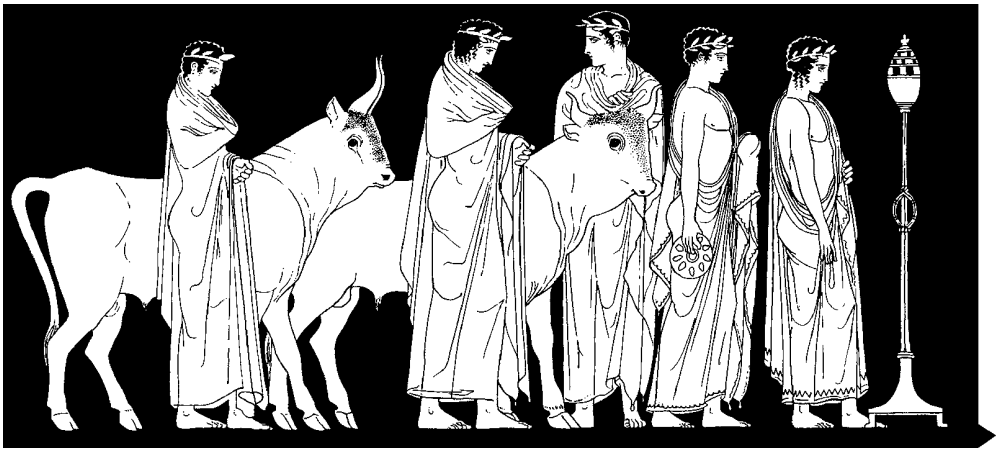
Processions: Definition and Brief History

A procession can be defined as a number of people moving forward in an orderly fashion as part of a ceremony or other ritual activity, generally of a religious nature. Omnipresent in all antique cultures, both polytheistic and monotheistic, processions often constituted the prologue for official rites, but could be equally valid for private, familial or associational rituals. The function of these processions could also be as varied as the practices they were associated with (propitiatory, apotropaic, commemorative, etc., see Table 3.1). In all cases, they allowed a communal visibility that supported an ideological medium of the first importance: demonstrating strength and cohesion. The methods and spiritual state of a procession could fluctuate considerably, from joyous to serious, from pompous to humble, or from serene to frantic, but always partaking of a certain solemnity and a

necessary degree of involvement from the participants. Concerning the distances covered, the range could be from a few hundred meters in an urban context to several kilometers (see infra). The types of journeys made could also vary from one way, return by the same path, going by one path and returning by another, circumambulation, etc.

In the past, processions played a fundamental role in religion and royal rituals of the ancient civilizations of the Near and Middle East, where they are principally known through iconographical documents. Sources are more diversified for Greek and Roman Antiquity; occasionally authors and the artists depicted with great precision the processional cortèges that preceded important ceremonies (for Greece, see Burkert 1985: 99–102; Connor 1987; Broder 2008; Viviers 2010; and Figure 3.1; for Rome, see Ryberg

(a)



(b)

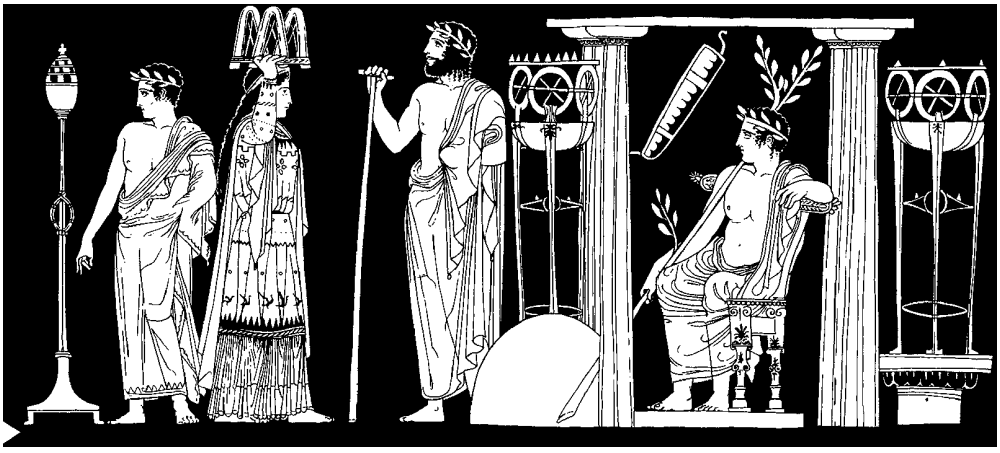


Figure 3.1a, b A procession arriving at the temple of Apollo. Attic Crater (fifth century BCE). Ferrara (Italy) T. 57, ARV 1143,1. Proceeded by a woman carrying a kanoun (basket containing offerings or cultic instruments) the main processional body is composed of young men dressed in a simple himation and leading the sacrificial oxen, who are received by the priest (hiereus) at the temple's entry and under the regard of Apollo. Redrawing by David Glauser (UNIL).

1955; Beard 2007; Ostenberg 2009). In the ancient Greek world these processions could take very different forms and significations: immense cortèges that represented the population in all its levels, such as the "Procession of the *peplos*", offered to Athena for the Panathenaic games; processions of virgins for the opening ceremony of the City Dionysia; the images of Ptolemaic Dynasty sovereigns' parades; military displays; festive cortèges (*komoi*) for the Bacchanalia; and the procession of the *Mystae* following the statue of Iacchos from Athens to Eleusis. The Latin term for procession is *pompa*, the word borrowed directly from the Greek *pompe*. Processions preceded most of the Roman festivals, amongst which the most creative were probably the triumphal processions organized in one man's honour, and the *pompa circensis* that brought "the men and the gods" of the capital city to the Circus Maximus (procession described by Dionysios of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 7.72). The available data for peripheral cultures is inadequate yet various indications permit the assumption that the barbarian populations also made use of processions. Originally considered as "diabolic" by the early Christian communities, processions were integrated in the ecclesiastical liturgy before the end of Antiquity, often taking over the pagan parade routes or the dates.

Processions, Archaeology and Embodiment

Processions are an element of ritual practice that leave unsubstantial traces and thus are the most difficult to detect through archaeological investigation. Without surviving literary and iconographic sources we would know very little about antique processions. However, archaeological findings allow the environment of these processions to be reconstructed and provide supplementary information about the utensils employed in them. Processional routes, well known in Egypt, the Greek world and at Rome, certainly comprise the most obvious type of structures, though the spatial distribution of sanctuaries suffices as support for the hypothesis of urban and rural processional routes. The topographical organization of towns and cultic sites, if sufficiently well mapped, permits the precise reconstitution of a processional walkway; in particular identifying the edifices on the route or the destination: places, temples, amphitheatres, hippodromes, etc. While musical instruments, mobile statuary and banners used for processions are known principally from textual and iconographical sources (see Siebert 1999), archaeologically recovered artefacts contribute additional data about regional particularities. In addition to furnishing detailed information through artefacts associated with the study of processions in Mediterranean cultures, archaeology can shed light on the situation of peripheral regions that lack literary and iconographic evidence.

Starting in the 1980s, advanced research into Celtic and Gallo-Roman cultic sites has furthered our understanding of their spatial organization, which in a number of cases appears to have been designed for circumambulation (Brunaux 1986: 34–5). This practice, present among other cultures such as the Roman's (Turcan 1998: 67–8) and including the modern Hindu world, remains difficult to identify through archaeological methods. It can only be revealed by a precise study of wear traces on the stone pavements on the surrounding walkways in Gallo-Roman temples or around Gaulish sacrificial altar pits. The topography of cultic sites, their integration in the (proto) urban fabric and the territorial organization allow the hypothetical reconstruction of processional routes.

In Gaul during the final La Tène period, processional routes were intended for serving urban cultic sites in the larger *oppida*, as well as "isolated" sacred sites such as the one situated on the Mormont Hill in western Switzerland, where multiple types of sacrifices, including human, were performed at the end of the second century BCE. The topography of Gallo-Roman sanctuaries also permits the proposition of hypotheses for the probable user's itineraries. The precise pathway's traces can be rendered visible by systematic metal detector surveys for finding and plotting the locations of shoe hobnails, a common object in Gaul during the first four centuries of our era. The land survey undertaken by a local team (*Caligae*) at and around the high altitude sanctuary on Mount Chasseron (Jura vaudois), which the University of Lausanne excavated in 2004 and 2005, confirmed the utilization of an ancient footpath that was still visible on the landscape. The survey also revealed other access routes constituting a hitherto unsuspected dense footbath network around the isolated mountain summit at an altitude of 1600 meters (Luginbühl, Cramatte, and Hoznour 2013).

The artefacts recovered from the Gaulish and Gallo-Roman cultic sites provide additional information about the *instrumentum* used during the rituals plus the processions, which for these cultures cannot be revealed by other types of archaeological inquiry. Depositions of liturgical objects, like the deposit from Tintignac (France) that contained trumpets, ensigns and ceremonial helmets, offer important information for the Gaulish period while *imagines* or busts of the emperor and standards for religious images mounted on a pole constitute the greater part of the documentation about *instrumentum* used for processions in the western provinces. Osteoarchaeological studies based on bone assemblages from the cult sites provide information about the victims sacrificed, and which had probably been paraded in the ceremonial procession. In the specific context of a sanctuary, the bone assemblages are analyzed for determining the animal species, gender and age as well as the slaughtering and butchering methods (Méniel 2001). The traces reveal the sacrificial tools used (axes, knives), items that may have been part of a display during the preliminary processions, as was practised in Rome.

In the absence of literary proofs or explicit iconographical sources, the study of the sensorial and physical implications resulting from participation in a procession in the ancient world can only be extrapolated from the archaeological findings that permit the reconstruction of the course and context (natural or constructed). The activity in question – advancing as a group in a formal manner – presents few practical difficulties apart from all participants having to maintain the same walking speed and spreading out equidistantly in order to avoid the "accordion effect". Those who have marched in a group or, more difficult, directed a group march, know that the exercise necessitates a certain amount of planning plus practical organization, as well as imposing and maintaining a sufficient level of discipline and, therefore, authority and psychology. People who have participated in such an exercise are aware that marching in a parade or procession first requires arriving at the departure point, rehearsing the schedule of events, refining the preparations, waiting (sometimes for a long time), and finally to fall into formation. The procession itself, the action of progressing together, as a coherent body, procures for the participants particular sensations and impressions, the sensation of being scrutinized or, more exactly, as being on display. Without a doubt, processions in Antiquity were perceived by the participants as being an emotionally charged experience, as is still the case today for Christian or Hindu processions. More than in other domains, ethnography

appears essential for seizing the sense of embodiment in a practice that constitutes a ritual in itself. This approach was utilized for the ethnoarchaeological research program conducted since 2001 in Nepal and Northern India by the author (see infra). Nepalese Hindu processions (*jhaki*) of different castes and ethnic groups can be separated into six main categories:

- Processions concerning transportation and display of a divine image, usually pulled in a chariot (*rath yatra*).
- Official processions for the state priests, like those called *fulpati yatra*, that each year traverse the 160 km route separating Kathmandu from the ancient royal residence of Gorka.
- Processions of sadhus (*trisul yatra*).
- Processions linked to the purification rites for priests (*kalash yatra*) and specific individuals (*swasudha yatra*).
- Popular processions with brass bands (*badhya yatra*) for accompanying festivals, celebrating marriages or significant calendrical dates (namely the Tamang and the Newar New Year).
- Funeral processions, solemn and silent for high castes (*tirthatan yatra*) or noisy and alcohol-driven for the Himalayan ethnic groups (*ghwayo*).

Although Occidental Antiquity and modern Nepal should not be conflated, the possibility offered by observing and participating in processions in which the procedures and functions are similar to those of the Antique world doubtlessly enlarges one's perspectives on this subject, particularly for the more personal aspects: an evident pride in participation both for the priests as well as for the common people, the manifestation and feeling of cohesion, the display of power in the grandiose ethnic processions, or the simple pleasure of being with family or friends. An impression is revealed in all cases of the feeling of representing a group and participating in the continuation of a tradition that was designed as an expression of identity.

Pilgrimages: Conditions and Categories

The term "pilgrimage" is from "pilgrim", derived from the Vulgar Latin *pelegrinus*, commonly accepted as meaning "foreign" and, by association, those who travel abroad. Originally used without religious connotations, this term acquired spiritual significance with the development of the practice among Christians, which leads historians to believe that "a pilgrimage" was a purely Christian ritual completely lacking roots in Antiquity (see Elsner and Rutherford 2005: 1–9). From the early 1990s, researchers have started to realize that this postulate was partially erroneous (Morinis 1992). Although the Christian definition of pilgrimage, which implies preparation and spiritual objectives in an essentially individualistic experience, cannot be applied to the polytheistic religions that had different forms of "sacred voyages", it is possible that some of the latter influenced the development of pilgrimages in Christianity. In part inspired by the more detailed typology of Elsner and Rutherford (2005: 12–30), but conceived for allowing integration of all types of religious-based voyages during Antiquity, the proposed seriation

Table 3.4 Theoretical seriation of religiously motivated voyages during Antiquity.

Travelling to destination of a cultic site	
Directing a religious ceremony	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates
Participating in the organization of a religious ceremony	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates, assistants, social categories
Attending a religious ceremony	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates, delegates, groups of laymen, layman
Participating in a religious assembly	
	Priests, magistrates
Obtaining an oracle	
	Rulers, priests, delegates, individuals
Care for, heal or prevent an illness	
	Individuals (all status levels)
Conclude or honour a vow	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates, individuals
Undergo initiation	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates, social categories, individuals
Spiritual or emotional experiences	
	Rulers, priests, individuals
Inspection of a site	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates
Visiting a site	
	Individuals (of all status levels)
Travelling to a destination of a natural or partially developed site	
Directing or attending a religious ceremony	
	Rulers, priests, magistrates, groups of individuals, individuals
Obtaining an oracle	
	Rulers, priests, individuals
Undergo initiation	
	Rulers, priests, combatants, individuals
Spiritual experiences	
	Individuals (of all status levels)

shown in Table 3.4 assembles the analysis on three levels. It takes into consideration first the type of site selected as the journey's end – a developed place of worship or a natural site, then the motivation for the voyage and, finally, the status of the person or persons who performed the pilgrimage.

The limits of this chapter do not allow an illustration of the many examples of the different types of identifiable voyages; the interested reader will find more information in Elsner and Rutherford (2005). Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that for all cultures, these voyages were most often taken to reach a specific destination and that they always had a precise objective, even if it was only to visit a sanctuary in an ancient form of tourism (see below). It is probable that a large part of these voyages, regardless of which civilization, were associated with ritual obligations (either directing or participating in a celebration) or with the desire to attend a public ceremony. The category of religious voyages for liturgical obligations is directly associated with the status of the persons

concerned, such as rulers, priests or magistrates. This can be illustrated by innumerable examples provided by literary or epigraphic sources: Pharaohs descending or ascending the Nile in order to participate in ceremonies, Greek and Roman priests travelling to one after another of the rural sanctuaries in their territory, or bishops (*episcopes*) from the first Christian communities roaming around their dioceses to celebrate mass and perform baptisms. The attraction of the ceremonies and particularly of the major religious festivals, integrating sacrifices, banquets, spectacles and games, is certainly also an important part of the beginnings of religiously motivated voyages in Antiquity. These "pious voyages" (in Greek: *eusebeias odoiporia*) had a particular importance in the Hellenic world where the grand sanctuaries attracted the cosmopolitan crowds for high-profile events such as the Olympic Games or the Pythian Games at Delphi. Nevertheless, in most cases, the voyages were on a smaller scale, usually within the city boundaries and concerned only the local population, like the example of the Boeotian Daidala festival consisting of a procession to the summit of Mount Cithaeron, or the organized ceremonies in the sanctuaries in the vicinity of Rome: at Lake Curtius, for the *Robigalia* or in honour of the Dea Dia (see notably Scheid 2005: 23–43).

The other categories of religious voyages known during Antiquity had even more precise objectives: participating in an assembly, such as the one organized each year by the Gallic Druids in the *Carnutes* territory (region of Chartres) or the councils of the Christian Churches. Voyages organized for receiving oracles at the specialized sanctuaries at Delphi or Dodone, were relatively frequent in the Greek world. Generally organized around an official delegation (*theoria*, a term also used for solemn processions), rulers or generals could also undertake this type of voyage, like Alexander and the Siwa Oasis or Vespasian and the oracle at Mount Carmel. Besides oracular sanctuaries, the most popular and most visited cultic sites during Antiquity were certainly those with a therapeutic vocation, those considered favourable for the finalization of vows and those promoting "mystical" initiations. The accomplishment of a voyage in search of spiritual experiences is most developed among the Christians, though the quest for emotion-laden experiences certainly motivated travellers who journeyed to the important mystery sanctuaries like Eleusis and Samothrace, as well as in places of worship dedicated to the eastern religions and, even, for traditional ceremonies of oblation. Other voyages of a religious character could have more prosaic incentives: inspection of the work and management in sanctuary or simply having a touristic interest (see André and Baslez 1993; Elsner and Rutherford 2005). These recreational visits, while having a religious aspect in spite of not being directly ritualistic, focus on cultic sites rendered "exceptional" by conditions of sacredness, monuments, location or history, and were subject to fierce competition between sanctuaries claiming equal or superior capacity for attracting pilgrims.

Religiously-motivated voyages undertaken for visiting natural or minimally-developed sites are less frequent than those with a true sanctuary as destination. They could be associated with collective religious practices like sacrifices or offerings at a site considered as being naturally sacred. An individual might travel to these remote, wild places to consult an oracle, become initiated or just to undergo a spiritual experience. These individual voyages take one of two forms: either a solitary quest or a retreat with a master. The solitary quest has great importance for shamanistic practices but also has a place among ancient religions. Moses on the mountain or Jesus in the desert are examples in the Judaic tradition. Examples from western cultures include practices such as the *Krypteia* of

the young Spartan warriors (an individual's secret incursions into Helot territory for reconnaissance and assassination, armed with only a knife) or solitary wanderings of the Celtic heroes, like the Irish Cúchulainn, searching for glory and warrior-witch initiation. Visiting hermitages or anchorites was also popular as the Christian hermit traditions developed in Egypt under the impetus of Saint Anthony of Egypt during the third century CE.

Archaeological Findings, Embodiment and Ethnographic Comparisons

Like processions in Antiquity, pilgrimages or, more precisely, religiously motivated voyages, have left few material traces and are known principally through written documents (texts and visitors' inscriptions) and, to a lesser degree, iconographical sources. Nevertheless, archaeology can permit the reconstitution of the contexts of the pilgrimages known in texts and particularly the spatial organization of the cult sites that served as the destination, such as the sanctuaries at Delphi and Eleusis. Archaeology also provides sufficient information for formulating hypotheses about attendance frequency for the places of worship lacking literary or epigraphic documentation and, therefore,the journeys taken by the visitors. The physical organization, spatial development and monumentality of cultic sites often allow an estimation of their importance, generally linked to their degree of sacrality, and a definition of the types of ritual activities that were performed there. These factors, as mentioned above, influenced the attendance frequency for an important sanctuary or one with a specialized function (cures, oracles, initiations, vows…) and could attract a potentially wider audience than a lesser place of worship dedicated to "normal" propitiatory rites.

Embodiment for these religiously motivated voyages can hardly be understood through archaeological investigation, and in the quasi-total absence of literary sources, requires an effort of imagination fuelled by practical experience and ethnographic comparisons. The different types of voyages cataloged here can be gathered together in two groups by the physical implications and the type of experience obtained: official voyages performed by priests, sovereigns, magistrates or messengers, and private voyages. Official voyages benefited from logistical support and networks that facilitated their completion and rendered them more comfortable, but even so remained comparatively difficult and even potentially dangerous, particularly because of bandits and pirates. A certain pride accompanied these official representatives or travelers on sanctioned missions but other feelings could have been equally present: anxiety and consciousness about the importance of the task for messengers dispatched to an oracular sanctuary, or fatigue in the case of repetitive official journeys.

As we have seen, religiously motivated voyages for individual persons were principally intended for traveling to public ceremonies or "useful" sanctuaries; auspicious for vows or therapeutic cures. These voyages could be accomplished alone or in a group, which were most probably family oriented in light of the iconographic representations. Like those of Christian pilgrims, the journeys were mostly made on foot, covering twenty to thirty kilometers per day. The pilgrims certainly carried part of their nourishment with them while a part could have been obtained from farmers or shops. Some nights were spent in places of worship and hospices that offered shelter, food and sometimes baths.

Other nights were probably passed in relay stations, in inns or with local inhabitants, but presumably very few under the stars since there was a real fear of wild animals, outlaws and ghosts. We can only speculate about the different states and ritual practices that may have punctuated these voyages, but it is probable that by repeatedly stopping at consecrated places found along the way to the large and important sanctuaries served as a psychological preparation for the pilgrims. The pilgrim's emotions were probably reflections of the varied motivations for their voyages: the hopes of fulfilling a vow, of recovering their health, acknowledgment of a vow fulfilled, the pleasure of seeing the landscapes and the monuments and of participating in a special event.

Also studied in the above-mentioned framework of the ethnoarchaeology research program, pilgrimages of the contemporary Hindu populations present obvious similarities with certain types of antique religious pilgrimages, but also specific elements, such as the importance of the purification rites in Hinduism. According to our sources (principally Brahmans from Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, among which were Professor Mukunda Raj Aryal, Ram Dahal and Bishnu Dahal), Hindu pilgrimages (tirtha yatra, "going to a sacred site") can be divided into two groups. The first group concerns those accomplished for one's self with the objective of making or honoring a vow, purification, being healed or participating in a festival. The second group concerns those for others, either for the *Pitri*, the "Fathers" or ancestor spirits that are conceptually similar to the Roman Manes, or for the protection of the country or an ethnic group.

The program of a Nepalese Hindu pilgrimage follows a precise protocol, beginning with a departure ceremony in the form of a farewell (*sagun khawney*). The route is then normally made on foot. It follows a defined itinerary charged with meaning, since the movement along the route is regulated by pauses at different places of worship where the pilgrims could find shelter. The actualization of a ritual, a sacrifice or usually an irrecoverable offering, normally constitutes the goal of journey. Once this is accomplished, a "party" is given in the sanctuary, and then the pilgrim makes the return journey, which is also marked by several religious activities. When the pilgrim arrives home, he must observe purification rites (*aarati utarney*) and organize a ceremony in which the entire family celebrates his safe return and gives thanks to the gods for the successful pilgrimage (*tirtha bhoj*). For all of our informants, for a religiously motivated journey to be considered as a "pilgrimage", it must be at least two days and one night away from home. The longer and more difficult the voyage, the more it is considered as valid, that is to say, the more it resembles a true, complete offering. The study and direct observation of Hindu pilgrimages allows a better comprehension of the experiences encountered by the devout travelers in Antiquity: road fatigue, nights spent under porticos, early morning frosts, and religious fervor, that allows an acceptance of the sufferings encountered. The Hindu sanctuaries that are reputed for fulfilling vows or having healing powers attract the majority of single purpose pilgrimages (often made in a group) and witness an expression of religiosity that was certainly similar to that which inspired the pre-Christian occidental pilgrims. Although the popular Hindu religiosity is based on a quite simplistic conception of the relations between mortal and divinities (*do ut das*), it does not lack spirituality, depth, or symbolic and mythological references. This transactional conception was certainly the same in Antiquity. One of the first results of having a familiarity with the Hindu places of worship is a better comprehension of the type of faith and the expectations that animated the past and continue to animate the present polytheistic populations.

Conclusions and New Perspectives

Without repeating the possibilities of archaeology for identifying ritual practices, among which more than 120 types of actions were identified, we would like to reiterate the potential of a taxonomic approach for the understanding of embodiment in ritual practices and the results of ethnoarchaeological investigation.

With regard to ritual practices, it is of interest to show the results of a taxonomic approach used to examine the different aspects of a rite: the breadth, function, degree of sacrality, levels of visibility, symbolism and the frequency of different types of dedicated actions.

These six criteria, which permitted the categorization of rituals, are applicable to all types of ritual practices in all cultures and for all periods. In this kind of system, the warrior rituals performed at the renowned Gaulish sanctuary at Gournay-sur-Aronde (see Brunaux 2000: 91–101) could be defined as relevant to the military realm, with a seemingly propitiatory and commemorative function, with a possible votive aspect if the enemies' weapons had been promised to the gods before the battle. Clearly the official status was given in relation to the values of a warrior nation, the circle of participants must have been principally composed of Druids and warriors. The symbolic aspect appears to be partly chthonian and partly celestial. The frequency of the ritual's performance is impossible to ascertain (regular, irregular, linked to warrior related events?). The practices associated with the ritual include mounting of trophies, blood sacrifices and banquets.

The taxonomic approach seems, in and of itself, able to categorize ritual practice in an "absolute" manner, but equally offers a utilitarian structure in which the archaeologist can perceive rites that were performed in sacred areas that were identified only by the most vestigial material traces. It remains difficult, indeed impossible, to determine the symbolism or the frequency of ritual practices in the absence of iconographic and epigraphic documents. Analyzing the archaeological findings from different viewpoints can facilitate the formulation of hypotheses about the degree of sacrality of a ritual, the community implicated and, especially, the different types of activities. This approach allows the archaeologist to posit "pertinent questions" about the findings, such as does the cultic site and the rituals performed therehave an official status and, if so, at what level? Who were the people that visited the site? Were the ritual practices votive, oracular or therapeutic? Taxonomic analysis is a useful sieve for effective interpretation of data, testing the possibilities and rendering evident the clues that allow attribution to one or another group of practices at a place of worship (the presence of pools, anatomic *ex-voto* plaques and *hospitalia* indicating therapeutic rituals).

Although the bulk of our knowledge about processions and the multitude of methods in Antiquity is based on literary and iconographic sources, archaeology can contribute significantly by returning to the landscape, either urban or rural, in which the rituals were performed (sanctuaries, processional ways, theaters…), but also can increase knowledge relating to processional *instrumentum*. For cultures like the Celts that have a distinct deficiency of literary and iconographic information about their rituals, archaeology allows a viable path of inquiry about the existence of ritual through the plans of the sanctuaries and certain isolated sacrificial sites.

Pilgrimages or religiously motivated voyages in Antiquity can be divided up into different categories according to destination, objective and status of the participants, of which only a few are admissible in the Christian notion of pilgrimage. The majority of these voyages leave few material traces, but the archaeological data, as in the case of the processions, can often identify the references mentioned in the literary or epigraphic sources, in addition to considering attendance rates and, by extension, the journeys linked to the visits to the sanctuaries unattested by written documentation.

The identification of a ritual allows an investigation of its embodiment by the performers, participants, and audience. Without any hope of finding a concrete archaeological demonstration, the study of embodiment finds support only in practical experimentation of the identified actions (ascending the hill to reach the sanctuary, for example, or slitting a goat's throat), as well as in the recourse to ethnographic or anthropological data. Without entering into a full discussion of the definition of ethnoarchaeology and its objectives, the important feature to retain is its use as an investigation strategy based on analogy, with the goal of employing ethnographical data for a better understanding and questioning of archaeological information (see David and Kramer 2001; Gallay 2011). One should still keep in mind that this approach does not provide direct responses to archaeologist's questions but that it offers the possibility of comparisons and reviewing the basic assumptions and a re-examination of the archaeological findings through the formulation of "useful" (archaeologically verifiable) hypotheses.

With regard to ritual practices, ethnographic comparisons using examples from today's polytheistic cultures can be particularly rewarding for the principle subjects (types of relationships between geographical location, divinities and rituals) as well as modalities (types of installations, management of the offerings and rubbish).

The previously mentioned research into Nepalese and Northern India Hindu cultic sites allowed the identification of over one thousand "elements" and one hundred types of dwellings, open areas and artefacts for public or private offering rituals that have been used for parallel comparison with Gaulish and Gallo-Roman cultures (see Luginbühl, forthcoming). The ethnographic reality makes evident the infinite complexity of traditional cultures and ritual practices, and reveals to the archaeologist the extremely incomplete nature of the data (Figure 3.2). In conclusion, the observation of Hindu religiosity can considerably modify the vision of an occidental archaeologist about the concepts and religious practices in Antiquity, their embodiment, and their spirituality.

Guide for Further Reading

Fundamental to the study of rituals in general are the works of Catherine Bell (1992, 1997), Arthur Maurice Hocart (2005), and John Scheid (2002). Information about the various aspects of processions in Antiquity can be found in studies like Connor (1987), Broder (2008), and Viviers (2010) for the Greek world; Ryberg (1955), Versnel (1970), Stadelmann (1982), Beard (2007), and Ostenberg (2009) for the Roman world. For sacred journeys, see the volume edited by Jas Elsner and Ian Rutherford (2005). Recent examples of rite restitutions through archaeological data can be found in Poux (2012: Corent, a Gaulish sanctuary in Auvergne, France), or in Luginbühl, Cramate, and Hoznour (2013: Chasseron, a Gallo-Roman mountaintop sanctuary in western Switzerland).

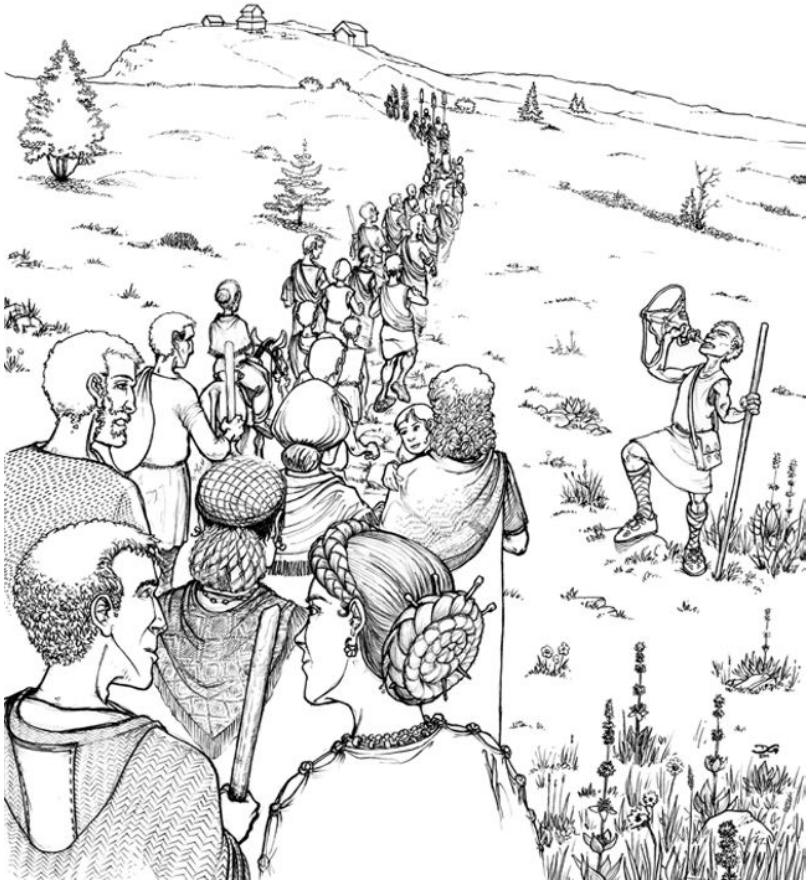


Figure 3.2 A procession (*pompa*) making its way to the Gallo-Roman sanctuary at the Chasseron Peak (Swiss Jura). The surveys around the site and an excavation permitted the identification of numerous ritual practices, consisting of official processions as well as private "pilgrimages". Drawing: David Glauser (Luginbühl, Cramatte, Hoznour 2013, University of Lausanne).

Information about the Mormont Gaulish sanctuary, still in study, can be found in a collective paper (*Mormont:* 2009). For other examples of rite and procession restitutions, see Scheid (2005: (Roman world); Brunaux (2000: Gaulish world) or Dondin-Payre and Raepsaet-Charlier (2006: Gallo-Roman provinces). An interesting anthropological study about sacred journeys can be found in Morinis (1992). For ethnoarchaeology definition, historiography, methods and problematics see David and Kramer (2001) and Gallay (2011).

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CHAPTER 4

Perpetuated Action

Lara Weiss

The archaeology of religion aims to reconstruct religious belief and practice in both shared and private space. Such an endeavor offers insights into practices which were not given textual shape on account of sacrality or marginality (e.g., Meskell 1999). At the same time, archaeological investigation has its own limitations as regards the meanings – now ambiguous – assigned to actual objects by earlier research. Any three-dimensional representation has to be interpreted – who is to say that what we identify as a divine image was not merely a toy and vice versa? Not everything can be decoded from contexts. As for religious practice and individual agency, archaeological remains reflect abandonment processes rather than snapshots of religious activities performed at a certain site (e.g., Schiffer 1985; Düring 2006). The archaeological record need not reflect the intentional perpetuation of a specific religious action. Although developed in the form of a case study, the present chapter hence addresses a general interpretive problem: Which type of ritual procedure can be expected to be accompanied or followed by representations of that action in a specific context? The case study presented here investigates evidence of religious practice at Deir el-Medina – a village once inhabited by workmen and their families, who were charged with decorating the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings during the New Kingdom period (roughly 1500 – 1100 BCE). The principles determining the presence or absence of material representations of the communication with the divine are specific to Egyptian culture, but they offer, I claim, a heuristic tool for other religious contexts, too.

Two Memorial Cultures?

The present investigation draws on Jan Assmann's distinction between monumental memorial and quotidian culture (*Gedächtniskultur* and *Gebrauchskultur*, respectively) (1991: 16–31). He differentiates two "cultures" based on the durability of the materials

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

Figure 4.1a,b Miniature stela with an incised representation of the god Ptah facing left. The god stands on a base line and holds a wAs-sceptre in his hands. Berlin ÄMP 21568. Line drawing from Möller, *Fundjournal*, 13; limestone; size: h. 4 cm; w. 3,5 cm; d. 1,1 cm. Courtesy of Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

they employ (e.g., mud brick vs. stone architecture) and the nature of various scripts (i.e., carved hieroglyphs on stone vs. hieratic cursive in ink). According to Assmann, both material and script relate to distinct contexts, that is, a monumental or quotidian culture (1991: 17). Whereas monumental stone architecture inscribed with hieroglyphs demonstrates a hope of perpetuity, uninscribed structures made of perishable

materials – such as mud brick, wood, and reed mats – suggest a more limited intention, one oriented toward everyday household and administrative needs. Deployed on perishable materials such as papyri, quotidian hieratic conveys this same orientation toward everyday necessities, such as accounting or epistolography.

Assmann's rather monolithic model requires some modification, however, for in addition to stone, high-quality wood decorated with metal elements also came into use for inscribed cultic images, architectural components, and other imperishable objects (cf. Baines 2007: 264–5). Although hieroglyphic inscriptions are thus not limited to perdurable objects, they unquestionably feature prominently on them. Inscriptions on stelae and statues, for instance, typically name their donors and thus guarantee their ongoing presence wherever the objects stood (e.g., the temple; see also Verbovsek 2004: 25). Another example are the (brief) offering formulae dedicated to the gods (`Htp dj nsw`, i.e., 'an offering that the king gives'), which precedes a list of ancient Egyptian offerings to the gods. Found in private and public contexts alike, these texts are performative insofar as their presence guaranteed the provision of standard offerings (e.g., Stadler 2005: 152); furthermore, the texts themselves also served as kingly offerings to the gods and thus ideally stood in for the king's personal presence, as did the dedicatory names attested on both statues and stelae. Inscriptions and decorations on temple walls seem to express the same conceptual framework, with priests representing the king in his offering duties and thus ensuring the order of the cosmos (see, e.g., Assmann 1990: 207).

Conversely, the performative power of text and decoration could be eliminated in a *damnatio memoriae,* an erasion of memory, through the iconographic defacement of humans or deities that had since fallen into disgrace (e.g., Bochi 1999: 77–8). A well-known example for attempted elimination of a deity's presence is, of course, the erasure of the god Amun's name during the Amarna period, when the sun god, Aton, became the main state deity. Obliteration of the name meant extinction of the character, as the smashed texts and decorations now lacked their subject – the god Amun – and hence their beneficiary. The *damnatio memoriae* was, however, performed far less thoroughly than is generally assumed (e.g., Gabolde 1998: 32 and note 260).

The Written Speech Act

As a subcategory of performative texts, "operative texts" consist of 'words [that] have the power to do things the very moment they are uttered' (Austin 1962; Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 4). These texts differ from other performative texts in that they have recitation markers that indicate the exact words to be spoken (e.g., Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 2). These texts appear in several contexts, which include the following:

- Royal hymns carved on temple walls showing the king in perpetual praise of the gods, who in return guaranteed the country's wellbeing (e.g., Teeter 1997)
- Private hymns carved on stelae portraying individuals and families in praise of the gods, who in return guaranteed their wellbeing (e.g., Luiselli 2011)
- Decorations on royal tomb walls showing the path of the sun god through the underworld and spells uttered against evil, which guaranteed the cosmos's continual wellbeing (e.g., Werning 2011), and

- Private tombs decorated with spells from the Book of the Dead, whose ongoing recitation guaranteed the deceased's wellbeing (during his path) in(to) the afterlife (e.g., Assmann 2005).

Accordingly, such texts (along with iconographic representations, as is demonstrated below) should not be understood as objects that were fixed in order to be "archived" (Assmann 2006: 27) but rather as speech recorded to be performed (Assmann 2000: 170–1). In analogy to the well-known theoretical category of speech act, a consequentious action performed by "merely" speaking (cf. Austin 1962; Meyer-Dietrich 2010), Assmann coined the term "writing act" (*Schreibakt*; 1991: 26; 2001: 322; cf. also Baines 2007: 151) to describe the performative re-enactment of these texts. However, this conceptualization requires some modification as well, for Assmann's term *Schreibakt* emphasizes the physical act of writing (*schreiben*), whereas these texts functioned not only during the process of writing itself, but also, and even primarily, after the completion of that process by enacting the performed action through the continuous (written) speech act. Written speech acts thus proved perpetual, despite their fixity or reification in writing, i.e., as "frozen" entities (on the latter term, see also Illich 1991).

Although even this terminology remains somewhat awkward, the important point to note is that what we see as distinct categories, namely inscribed text versus spoken word, is not a categorization that can readily be taken for granted in ancient Egypt. The texts present were in fact much closer to the spoken word and should hence be understood as such: as a perpetuation of a speech act rather than a secondary textual fixation (or textualization) of said speech act in writing. Theorization of these "texts" as retained speech (cf. Ong 1967: 93) – i.e., automatic re-enactment without the presence of human agents – receives substantial support in the form of ritual instructions from private tombs that indicate who should *speak* the subsequent words, the recitation marker being the common formula `Dd md.w jn` ("words to be spoken by"). Put differently, these written speech acts ensured ongoing perpetual performance of speech in places otherwise inaccessible to the living (see also Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 3), i.e., where the speech act could no longer be performed. Moreover, these texts make explicit not only which actors performed which rituals on behalf of the dead but also which objects were incorporated into said rituals. These explanations, however, fall not into the specific category of written speech acts but should rather be more broadly classified as performative text acts, that is, texts whose presence assured the ongoing performance of the ritual described (see also Assmann 2001: 335; 2007: 151).

Inaccessible venues such as tombs probably prompted the performance of rituals during the funeral, with the closure of the tomb chamber then requiring written speech acts to replace the verbal ones executed by the living. Yet even accessible localities may have witnessed the supplementation of verbal speech acts with written ones. During the Old Kingdom, formulae carved on the outside of tombs appealed to the living to commemorate the deceased (e.g., Shubert 2007). Here, the written speech act functions on two distinguishable levels: the text serves as a written speech act first to ensure ongoing performance of the speech act and, second, to encourage passersby to recite the formulae (on "words as deeds act[ing] simultaneously on two levels;" cf. Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 4). We are therefore dealing with two different analytical categories. First, there are said written speech acts that act autonomously by their presence on the wall. Second, there are

the real speech acts that require human agents in order to be performed (see also below). These two categories, however, become somewhat diffuse when written speech acts are recited by human agents, during the placement of a statue in a temple, for instance. Put differently, written speech acts can thus be re-transformed into speech acts by reciting them; the written speech act then becomes the reference for what is being recited – at least for the duration of the event – and thus temporarily loses its quality as a written speech act.

Both written speech acts and performative texts guaranteed perpetual offerings not only within the mortuary context, but also on architecture and artifacts used by the living. Private votive stelae placed in public chapels or temples, for instance, usually depict individuals with their families and/or co-workers, presenting offerings to the god(s). In the New Kingdom, these stelae typically also feature hymnal texts that begin with the so-called `rdj.t-jAw-n`-formula (i.e., "praise to" followed by the name of the god(s) to whom the stela was dedicated). Such texts continuously perform or re-enact the divine praise offered by individuals or groups through the written speech acts (cf., e.g., Luiselli 2007, 2011). Written speech acts also appear in hieratic, as is shown by an unpublished ostracon inscribed with a list of deceased kings (Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung P. 12655, unpublished; cf. Weiss 2015). The initial recitation marker `dwA.w` ("praise") characterizes the text as a written speech act oriented towards royal ancestors. Since the ostracon's precise find spot within the broader village context of Deir el-Medina remains unclear, its localization in either private or public sphere proves difficult. Nonetheless, the find does challenge Assmann's assumption of a bipolar culture (1991: 27) regarding the usage of either hieroglyphic or hieratic script. Despite its possible association with quotidian culture, the ostracon clearly functioned as a memory signal. While two spheres or cultures obtain as a heuristic model, commemorative practice cannot be linked to the one *or* the other. Borderlines were fluid and commemoration found expression in both these domains.

In summary, in ancient Egypt some formulae inscribed on tomb and temple walls or statues and stelae functioned as written speech acts, others as performative texts. Written speech acts not only documented spoken words (such as hymnal texts) but also replaced those words, repeating them into perpetuity. In contrast, written speech acts could also be transformed back into speech acts when such formulae stood in accessible locations that allowed for recitation by the living (compare also Baines 2007: 151). This duality further applied to performative texts, which could replace or supplement actors and offerings alike. Both types of operative texts gave "rise to the actual existence" (Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 1) of offerings – one through continuous recitation of the offering formulae and the other through presentation of the offerings mentioned in the formulae (e.g., beer, bread, fowl, beef, etc.; see below). Typically, though not categorically, written speech acts as well as performative texts found themselves in physical domains either inaccessible or less visited by the living.

The Speech Act

Performed in spoken word (Austin 1962), speech acts remain difficult to trace in the archaeological record. For cultures long past, evidence of speech acts thus comes from written sources. Within ancient Egypt, recitation markers indicate texts originally

intended for oral expression (Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 2). Meyer-Dietrich has argued that, in practice, the ritual speech acts required "a state of purity, preparation for the act itself, speaker competence and ritual mastery" (Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 5). For the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, we have evidence of these requirements in the form of the so-called Book of the Temple, which elaborates the priestly training required for proper recitation of spells and hymns (Quack 2002; cf., Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 2). In the New Kingdom, ritual performance required both purity and (restricted) knowledge, as is indicated by, e.g., the Book of the Dead (Meyer-Dietrich 2010: 5).

These criteria, however, do not necessarily restrict religious speech acts to religious specialists alone. Recitation markers or written speech acts have not emerged from the domestic record of Deir el-Medina, but this absence may provide indirect evidence for the performance of (unwritten) speech acts within the private sphere of social life. Given the understanding of written speech acts as replacements of the actual act of speaking, their absence in the private sphere is not entirely unexpected. The private sphere allowed for the regular performance of hymns and prayers, and written speech acts might hence have been considered unnecessary. This converges with the more general dearth of ritual instructions and hymnal texts on cultic equipment found in domestic contexts, with the exception of the offering formulae that invoke the idealized presence of the king.

Though of unknown provenance, a group of ostraca, inscribed sherds, records a formula that might attest to speech acts performed within the domestic and public cultic spheres. These brief hymns begin with an invocation in the imperative form "come to me!" (mj n=j) followed by the name of a god (cf. Luiselli 2011: 199). The formula is in fact occasionally attested carved in stone (e.g., on stela Cairo CM171; cf. Luiselli 2011: 396), but appears only as part of the narrative of the hymn and not as an initial recitation maker like on the present ostraca. Contrary to more elaborate hymns known from stelae, these short texts provide no indication of time or place (Luiselli 2011: 215–7). Some authors have interpreted them as school texts that lacked any cultic background (e.g., Luiselli 2011: 215–8). While these ostraca were probably not employed in religious practice – and thus did not function as written speech acts – the texts may nevertheless reflect a phraseology that differs from the language register used in the public domain, as with, e.g., votive stelae stationed in a state temple that display the aforementioned praise-formula (rdj.t-jAw-n-formula).

Attestation of the vernacular in school texts remains quite plausible since a greater freedom of literary expression frequently characterizes such texts (Luiselli 2011: 217). In this case, school texts might reflect an oral tradition which could in turn suggest that elaborate formulae were not always typical of daily practice. Put differently, both god(s) and ancestor(s) may have been approached less formally in private spoken prayer than in public written text (i.e., in a written speech act). The hypothesis that less elaborate hymns were sung within the home does not weaken the theory of written speech acts replacing speech acts, because both forms were not necessarily identical. From this perspective, the ostraca's nature as school texts or religious documents becomes only a secondary concern: the texts attest, but do not replace speech. They provide, then, a slightly different insight into religious speech acts that might be closer to Egyptian realities of daily life than the formal written speech acts that perpetuate forever. Written speech acts would not, therefore, necessarily represent everyday religious practice in the home.

The coexistence of written and spoken speech acts leads directly into a discussion of orality and literacy (see e.g., Goody 2004; Moreland 2001: 86) – a subject that cannot possibly be fully investigated here. Despite probable differences between speech acts performed at home and those potentially performed but certainly fixed, in writing and present in public, speech acts prove remarkable as a religious practice, recalling Walter Ong's (1967) argument for speech as *the* crucial element of religious practice, particularly in "the earlier oral-aural world, with its concentration on voice and sound" (Ong 1967: 10). It is in oral societies that the spoken word is "powerful, effective … far more than" in those societies highly dependent upon the written word (1967: 17 this aspect is elaborated in detail in Weiss 2014). Although Deir el-Medina has yielded an abundance of written evidence, the village's daily life nonetheless rested within a largely oral society (e.g., Haring 2003). Comparatively elaborate, the official, primarily written language differed from the domestic register significantly and may indeed have required knowledge unavailable to most denizens.

In sum, written speech acts do not *prima facie* serve as cultural snapshots of speech acts performed within the home. Nevertheless, numerous small chapels along with uninscribed stelae and statues discovered in homes all suggest that god(s) and ancestor(s) could be approached on a regular basis – perhaps in a relatively informal manner. The decoration of statuettes and stelae located in communal space contrasts sharply with those that stem from the domestic sphere; the absence of elaborate written acts on the latter may thus suggest that speech acts were the most important means of divine and ancestral communication in the household. The ability to perform speech acts made their preservation in writing superfluous, creating expectations of written speech acts within the public rather than the private sphere (e.g., Adrom 2005).

The Pictorial Act

Pictorial acts offered a third strategy for communicating with the superhuman. This term derives from Søren Kjørup's "pictorial *speech* act" (Kjørup 1978: 55–71, my emphasis), which indicates the efficaciousness of pictorial representations independent of speech acts (see also Luiselli 2007: 88). Most offering tables, stelae, and statuettes from the houses of Deir el-Medina show representations of god(s) and ancestors receiving oblations and/or individuals worshipping in front of them. These representations not only reveal a conceptual truth (Ikram 1995: 1–3) in the act of offering but also have the capacity to *create* this truth (e.g., Teeter 2011: 5). As in the case of written speech acts – which simultaneously symbolized, reproduced, and created hymns for eternity – depictions of offerings were as real as the physical offerings themselves (compare also Bahrani 2003: 127). Two examples from the royal context may serve to illustrate this principle: (a) representations of the king smiting Egypt's enemies enacted Egypt's ongoing victory; (b) the portrayal of enemies bound beneath the soles of Thutankhamun's sandals effected the king's trampling of them with each step.

While these representations may indeed guarantee the continuance of the activity portrayed, I would like to suggest yet another, more reduced form of the pictorial act, namely that the depiction of offerings implied the act of offering *pars pro toto.* In other words, renderings of offered goods might have enacted or effected the act of offering

even if the goods alone – and not the act itself – received representation. This hypothesis may require further elaboration. Egyptian offering tables were usually decorated with gifts such as bread and fowl, and scholars have typically interpreted such images as equally real as physical offerings (e.g., Hölzl 2002: 65–6); illustration of a fattened ox could thus have the same symbolic significance as an actual piece of meat (in general Baines 2007: 214). A similar symbolic significance may apply to some of the village's pictorial ostraca. Indeed, some with depictions of fattened oxen have been blackened by smoke, perhaps indicative of ritual burning. These traces of smoke might indicate a symbolic action parallel to the burning of real meat on the physical offering grills discovered at the site.

An expensive commodity, meat was not available to everyone (Ikram 1995: 8 and 200). Though by no means rare at Deir el-Medina, beef came to the villagers only as a special reward or on special occasions (e.g., Janssen 1975: 489–90), in most cases local or translocal feasts (see Jauhiainen 2009: 297; Wente 1990: 140). Beef was thus a good highly valued by the gods but one offered without regularity, as is suggested by the rarity of offering grills at Deir el-Medina. Pictorial ostraca with representations of meat may have substituted real meat offerings. Illustrations of flowers, palm branches, and the like may also have served similar purposes. Judging by the iconography found on stelae, lotus flowers were a particularly common offering in relation to ancestral cults (Demarée 1983: 174). As pictorial acts, they would be "more durable in the desert heat than real flowers would be" (Sadek 1988: 78). Pinch (1993: 355) has shown that in "state-run shrines … [t]he emphasis was on the symbolic rather than the intrinsic value of the … offerings." Although Pinch's argument relates to the intrinsic value of votive offerings, her conclusion could also support the substitution of less valuable materials for real offerings. Though not excluded from the private realm, domestic practice may have transformed otherwise expensive or unavailable commodities into real offerings through performance of speech acts, the representation functioning as a model offering rather than a speech act. Two-dimensional representations of various offerings would therefore possess an equivalent symbolic significance and, what's more, would provide the advantage of enhanced durability or even perdurability.

The permanency of model offerings (as pictorial acts) matches that of written speech acts, suggesting a similar function. If one considers the nature of the hieroglyphic script, the likeness between the textual and the pictorial emerges as a structural identity. As a matter of fact, the "textual always contains the pictorial, and the pictorial has a constant effect on the textual … Thus, we need not think of two areas of words and images with functional similarities or parallels. The two are structurally the same because they belong to the same system of signification" (Bahrani 2003: 128 on Babylonia and Assyria). Taking this into account, it is plausible that both the pictorial and written acts had the same function, with the result that some model offerings may have served as pictorial acts. Within this context, however, the distinction between the act of offering and pictorial acts remains analytically important insofar as model offerings stood not as pictorial acts but as actual offerings, as in the case of meat substitution on an altar. Like written speech acts, which may have emerged as original speech acts on occasion of a ritual performance (e.g., when a votive stela was put up in a temple or a family member was buried in his or her tomb), the model offering may have become a pictorial act. These

different layers of "ritual, its pictorial record, the recurring divine event, and perhaps also an oral narrative recited during the performance" find parallel in Mesopotamian representations (Bahrani 2002: 21; 2003). As was previously mentioned, this interpretation is particularly plausible for representations of offering acts. In certain contexts, then, the representations could themselves be interpreted as pictorial acts on the principle of *pars pro toto*, i.e., depiction of the good alone stands for the entire act of offering it. Permanent representation ensures ongoing offering. Accordingly, pictorial acts – like written speech acts – find more frequent attestation within public or relatively inaccessible spaces.

Conclusion

The present analysis of ancient Egyptian communication strategies with the otherworldly does not feign comprehensiveness. The nature of the archaeological record for household assemblages does not permit inquiry into dreams (e.g., Szpakowska 2003: 123–57), trances, music, or the like. As a rule, palpable archaeological evidence of actual religious practice performed in the domestic sphere receives only indirect attestation. Identification of religious venues such as altars and niches often remains possible. Instead, which agent performed which action at which time in which sequence often remains obscure at best. Such obscurity applies to individual belief and religious experience as well. Without reflective texts, the boundaries between social obligation and personal piety as motivation for individual performance lie beyond the realm of certainty. From ancient Egypt, no such texts have emerged. Nevertheless, analysis of direct and indirect archaeological evidence allows the identification of three main strategies for communication with the superhuman. The present study provides principles for predicting which kind of information can come from the archaeological record and for interpreting the context of religious artifacts even if their provenance is unclear.

In summary, I would like to offer the following model as a heuristic tool for archaeology of religion in other cultures: In ancient Egypt, the three main strategies of interaction with the otherworldly were written speech acts, speech acts, and pictorial acts. The primary strategy of approaching the otherworldly was by means of speech act. Though difficult to trace in the archaeological record, indirect evidence indicates the significance of the written speech act. The absence of written speech acts in the archaeological evidence from the domestic sphere then confirms that written speech acts were primarily to be found in areas inaccessible for the regular performance of cultic activities, i.e., places inaccessible to living human actors. In the ancient Egyptian context, such inaccessible places were tombs, but also temples that showed the king ideally taking care of the order of the cosmos by means of written speech acts and offerings to the gods, whereas in practice he was of course represented by the respective priesthood of a given temple. The pictorial act could serve to support the written speech act by showing and thereby enacting the offerings and/or prayers on the stelae. Speech acts accompanying pictorial acts remain less likely since a model offering became a pictorial act only at a later stage, that is, through placement in an inaccessible space where it could perpetually re-enact the act of offering.

Guide to Further Reading

Full discussion of the archaeological evidence underlying the present model comes from Weiss (2015). This model is, in turn, based on earlier studies by Austin (1962); Assmann (1991; 2001); Baines (2007), Bredekamp (2010), Luiselli (2007); Seja (2007), and others. For further reading on performative speech, see also Searl (2002: 85-107; 1969). On religion at Deir el-Medina, see also Luiselli (2011).

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CHAPTER 5

Public and Private

Robert Parker

Inadequacy of the Distinction

The attempt to distinguish sharply between "public" and "private" aspects of ancient religion is out of favor; current scholarship varies between stressing the many overlaps between the two spheres and dismissing the opposition outright as unworkable. On a semantic level, the contrastive pairs in Greek *demosios – idios* (public–individual), *demos–idiotes* (people–private citizen), though sometimes applied in religious as in other contexts, do not correspond precisely to the opposition of public to private. They occur most commonly in relation to payments: when an *idiotes* brings a sacrifice at a particular shrine or consults a particular oracle, the tariff is such and such, when the people does the same, the tariff is different. The link to payment persists where we hear of sacrifices and priests and even occasionally gods who are "financed by the people" (*demoteles*). A sacrifice brought by an *idiotes* is privately financed, but not necessarily private in any other sense; there is no implication of exclusivity or privacy. The *idiotes* is just a person acting on his own behalf, as an individual. The situation is different in Latin, in that the distinction between *sacra publica* (public rites) and *sacra privata* (private rites) is one drawn explicitly in Roman sources (e.g., Festus p. 284 Lindsay). But even if we disregard uncertainties about the scope of the two terms and ambiguous cases, the distinction relates again to issues of ownership (of shrines) and payment (for rites); from a rite or shrine's status as "public" or "private", no necessary conclusion follows about its clientele or popular appeal. So the approach through ancient categories is of limited use. But if one thinks instead in terms of categories that come naturally to a modern observer, a simple example will show the intertwining of the two spheres. An obvious instance of "personal religion" among the Greeks or Romans is the votive offering brought in gratitude for a cure or other benefit. But though one could make the vow anywhere, one could only deposit the offering in a sanctuary that would normally be under public control.

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

(There is an interesting lack of symmetry here between sacrifices, which could be made in a private house, and votives which were always brought to sacred places.) Nobody denies that ancients performed some religious acts as members of a collectivity, with accompanying prayers for the good of the collectivity, others as individuals with accompanying prayers for their own or their family's welfare; the same distinction applies in divination and in other areas. In that sense one can distinguish individual or small group from large group religion, and ask whether the importance of the two in the life of individuals in antiquity was historically variable (Rüpke 2013: 291–3). But even for private ends it was regularly gods of the community that the individual approached. As the example of dedication shows, the act *par excellence* of private religion required a public religious site for its completion.

The truth is that "public" and "private" are very blunt tools, as are their partial equivalents in other languages. A much longer inventory of differences needs to be consulted. In relation to a sacrifice or other ritual act, we need to ask who pays for it, who performs it, where it is performed (and who owns the place of performance), for whose stated benefit it is performed, who participates in it, on what occasion it is performed, and with what if any intended audience; also, whether it is prescribed by tradition or in some way individual or idiosyncratic. The point of this inventory is that, in relation to a single act, the answers to different questions will lie at different points on the "private to public" spectrum. To revert to the simple votive, it will often be dedicated by one individual on behalf of another (or several others: "my children") in a public sanctuary. Many publicly-financed rituals were performed by small groups of publicly-appointed sacred officials on behalf of a whole community but in the presence of nobody except themselves. Conversely, an impressive funeral cortège or elaborate dedication, though privately financed, will have attracted much public attention, and was doubtless intended to do so. An individual might dedicate an altar "for anyone who wishes to sacrifice on" (e.g., *IG* 2^2 4547 A 6–7, in a sanctuary of the river god Kephisos at Phaleron). Privately-financed endowments might top up the supply of meat at public sacrifices. Initiation in the Mysteries at Eleusis was in one sense an unusually personal religious act: each initiate made a preliminary sacrifice which is explicitly (and unusually) attested as being "on his own behalf". The aim was to improve one's own lot in the afterlife, not anyone else's! But as an experience it derived its intensity from being collective, from the revelation made to a large group amid the flittering torchlight: the large initiation hall is the archaeological touchstone of Mysteries. Many public festivals had a domestic dimension, with special foodstuffs being eaten in private houses alongside the rites conducted at the public sanctuaries. In Anatolia, individuals often made dedications on behalf of their whole village (Schuler 2012: 80). In short, one can legitimately ask whether a given sanctuary was publicly owned, and whether a given priest or (with some complications mentioned above) sacrifice was "public" (Roman) or "financed by the people" (Greek); but the answer to those questions will not necessarily correlate with what we can infer about collective involvement in the event, its importance for a community.

Another difficulty lies in groups intermediate between the individual or household and the city. One can put the rites and shrines of the sub-units (demes, tribes) from which the city was made up on the public side of the divide, even though in native terminology they had distinctive descriptions and were not classed simply as "public": the rites of the Athenian demes, for instance (the 139 sub-divisions of the Athenian polis)

were "*demotika*" ("of the deme"), not *demosia* ("public") or *demotele* ("publicly-financed"). But there were many other types of intermediate grouping, to some of which, such as Greek phratries, all citizens belonged, while others were more restricted. Some of the latter were hereditary (Greek *gene*, Roman *gentes*) whereas others, such as the many voluntary associations of both the Greek and Roman world, were joined by choice and payment. The relation of restricted membership groups of both types to cults of the whole city was various (for Greece see Aneziri 2012: 73–4): in some cases there was no connection, whereas in others the association's sanctuary might be the site of a public festival or the association might participate in other ways. There is no point torturing oneself in an attempt to decide whether these bodies and activities are to be classified as public or private. The only safe generalization is that their position is ambiguous, and one must look to the specifics of the individual case.

An Alternative: Domestic Religion

Private religion having been banished as a category in disgrace, scholars have proposed "domestic religion" as an alternative. Many religious activities were undertaken in and around ancient houses, primarily by the regular residents as a group or by the head of the household on its behalf; religious objects of distinctive types were found in houses; these activities and objects therefore constitute a coherent entity that can be described, domestic religion. As a presiding hero of domestic religion we can consecrate Aeneas, rescuing his Penates from burning Troy; or perhaps Leocrates, the Athenian who panicked after the defeat at Chaironeia in 337 and fled to Megara, taking with him his "ancestral sacred objects"; Leocrates' devotion to his ancestral sacred objects, combined with despair about his country's future, earned him prosecution by the leading politician of the day, Lycurgus, who accused him of "exporting the goodwill of the gods" towards Athens (Lycurgus, *Leocrates* 25–6). Women at marriage were snatched away, we are told in moving passages of Greek tragedy, from their "ancestral gods" (Sophocles fr. 583.8; Euripides fr. 318.4): these too must have been located within the house, since women lacked access to ancestral gods of other types such as those of the phratry.

"Domestic" religion is indeed a more serviceable category than "private"; but even here some cautions must be entered. Perhaps the least serious is that the domestic religion of any one household is likely to have very much resembled that of any other (the extent of variability is a question to return to); it expressed the unity of the household but, given by tradition of the city, it did not express the distinctiveness of one household as against another. In that sense it can still be seen as part of the religion of the city. Still, if one presses the criterion of distinctiveness too hard, the categories of the individual and the domestic are in danger of disappearing altogether: a family Christmas is still a family Christmas even if millions of other families are celebrating it in much the same way (see Chapter 33). Nor perhaps is it crucial that in Greek a separate class of "household gods" is very seldom singled out within the broader class of "ancestral gods" (which includes also those for instance of the phratry) of which they are a division. (Even the very familiar "household gods" of the Romans are not so described but have specific names, Lares and Penates.) It is not in doubt that many sacrifices took place in private houses, particularly of course those of the rich.

One must, however, guard against the assumption that the gods of the house were somehow more central and primary in the religious experience of the individual than the gods he approached outside the house. The fourth century BCE historian Theopompos told the exemplary story of how Apollo at Delphi supposedly identified one Clearchus of Methydrion as the model of piety pleasing to the gods: this Clearchus, it seems, "conscientiously performed rites and sacrificed at the appropriate times, each new moon crowning and cleansing his Herm and Hecate and the rest of the sacred objects which his ancestors had bequeathed to him, and honoring them with incense and *psaista* and *popana* [two forms of savory cake]. And each year he participated in publicly-financed sacrifices, omitting no festival," making simple offerings of seasonal produce in lieu of elaborate cattle sacrifice (Theopompos, *FGrHist* 115 fr. 334). This is, to be sure, the most vivid vignette that we have of domestic religion; but would Apollo have been so pleased with Clearchus had he confined himself to crowning his Herm and Hecate and not also attended all the public festivals? The range of possibilities outside the house may have been more limited for women, but there were such possibilities, and indeed obligations, for them too. And, as was noted above, the public festivals entered the house through the parallel rites performed, and special foodstuffs eaten within them, at those times.

It is also the case that, in Greece, the main gods of the household are not exclusive to it. The best attested cults practiced within the household are those of the hearth, Hestia, to whom new-born children, newly-acquired slaves, and newly-wedded wives were ritually introduced, of Zeus Ktesios (of property), and, just outside the door, of the household Herm, Hecate, and Apollo Aguieus (of the streets). (The locale of Zeus Herkeios, "of the (external) courtyard", is uncertain; in Homeric houses which had such an external court he was worshipped within it, but the courts of the classical house were typically internal; his cult persisted, but whether it had migrated to the internal courtyard or was now confined to non-domestic contexts is unclear.) Every well-established house probably had a cult of Hestia and of Zeus Ktesios; the others were common if not universal. But all these gods were also worshipped at the level of the deme or the city. It is true that the civic cults of Hestia and Zeus Ktesios represent, one might say, the city's recognition of the importance of the household, not the household's of the city's. But the continuity is still important. At meals it was conventional to make libations to Agathos Daimon ("Good Deity"), Zeus Soter ("Savior Zeus"), and Hestia. But that was probably a convention of dining, wherever it occurred, not specifically of the household. "God-entertaining" (*theoxenia*) was an important ritual form whereby a couch and a table of foodstuffs were laid out for divine visitors, above all the Dioscuri (Jameson 1994). It was practiced in private houses but also in civic contexts.

Even the famous domestic cults of the Romans, those of Vesta, Lares and Penates, honored deities not confined to the house. There were Penates Publici, the Lar Familiaris was a specialization within a wide spectrum of Lares with diverse concerns, and the round public temple of Vesta still stands on the Forum Romanum. We can allow, however, that the domestic cult had a distinctive shape. The familial Lar or Lares (both numbers are found in texts, but in depictions there are almost always two) acquired an association with ancestors, and thus a special relationship with the familial group. In Pompeii, painted images of the Lares on walls were sometimes effaced and replaced with something very similar: presumably the house had changed ownership and the new

owners required their own Lares. Along with the Lares was worshipped the Genius of the paterfamilias; this was another cult that turned the familial group in upon itself. The Dei Penates by contrast, though named from the household stores, *penus*, and thus resembling Zeus of Property, in fact broke free from that narrow functional definition and came to embrace "all the gods cultivated within the house" (Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 2.514). Put in other terms, there were no specific Penates but every *paterfamilias* made his own selection (no doubt much influenced by family tradition) of gods to honor in this role. Here then was scope for individual choice and preference (though still within the received framework of the Penates housed within a *lararium*). In the uniquely abundant evidence from Pompeii we find no fewer than thirty-four different gods honored as Penates in *lararia* (Dubordieu 2012: 36), usually in clusters which could be very diverse: one assemblage brings together Jupiter, Minerva, Aesculapius, Fortuna, Isis, Harpocrates, and a Bacchant. A late but striking illustration is the (probably fictitious) report in a source from the fourth century CE that the emperor Severus Alexander (225–235 CE) kept in his *lararium* images of his ancestors and also of Alexander the Great, the best deified emperors, and certain "more holy souls" such as Apollonius of Tyana, Christ, Abraham and Orpheus (Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Severus Alexander* 29.2). All these household gods remained sufficiently important to be given special mention in the emperor Theodosius' prohibition on pagan worship: "let nobody by a more secret rite [*secretiore piaculo*], honoring the Lar with fire, the Genius with wine, the Penates with perfume, light lamps, place incense, hang up garlands" (*Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.12) —a convenient summary of some typical forms of domestic cult.

The range of gods worshipped within the Greek house could also be extended to some degree by *ad hoc* foundation of shrines. Plato inveighs against it in one of the most famous and revealing of all testimonies to personal religion in antiquity:

> No one shall possess a shrine in his own house: when any one is moved in spirit to do sacrifice, he shall go to the public places to sacrifice, and he shall hand over his oblations to the priests and priestesses to whom belongs the consecration thereof; and he himself, together with any associates he may choose, shall join in the prayers. This procedure shall be observed for the following reasons—It is no easy task to found temples and gods, and to do this rightly needs much deliberation; yet it is customary for all women especially, and for sick folk everywhere, and those in peril or in distress (whatever the nature of the distress), and conversely for those who have had a slice of good fortune, to dedicate whatever happens to be at hand at the moment, and to vow sacrifices and promise the founding of shrines to gods and demi-gods and children of gods; and through terrors caused by waking visions or by dreams, and in like manner as they recall many visions and try to provide remedies for each of them, they are wont to found altars and shrines, and to fill with them every house and every village, and open places too, and every spot which was the scene of such experiences (Plato, *Laws* 909d–910a, trsl. Robert G. Bury).

Plato veers at the end of his denunciation from shrines established in private houses to others in villages and open places. What matters to him is not the place but the uncontrolled personal initiative in a matter of religion. The phenomenon of modest altars set up by individuals "for any who wishes to sacrifice on" (thus outside the house) was mentioned above. As for cults within houses, on the one side we have Plato; on the other, as

we shall see, only scarce confirmation from archaeology. How seriously one should take the aged Plato's assessment of the religion situation of his day is a problem that does not arise in this case alone; is his picture of atheistic tendencies, for instance, realistic or paranoiac? At all events, the institutionalized practice of choosing gods to set up in one's *lararium* lacks a Greek equivalent.

The Archaeology of Domestic Religion

The material for "public and private" religion in general is uncontrollably large. Private dedications by individuals must number in the millions, whereas the archaeology of public religion is almost co-extensive with that of the vast number of surviving temples and excavated sanctuaries. Here again, domestic religion is a more practicable subject (see Chapter 16 for further details). But on the Greek side it proves surprisingly elusive. The proportion of excavated houses which show traces of a fixed hearth is so small that, according to an authoritative account (Jameson 1990: 192–3), we must conclude that most households relied on portable braziers; the religious value of the hearth persisted even though its physical expression was unimpressive (on the houses at Olynthos that do have hearths, see Morgan 2010: 157–9.) Nor have the herms and images of Hecate and Apollo Aguieus that supposedly stood outside the threshold left any traces of themselves; here too it has been suggested that the literary references present an ideal as if it were a norm (Jameson 1990: 194), or that the gods were evoked by small portable objects or symbols (Morgan 2010: 151). Zeus Ktesios was sometimes imagined as a snake, but his material embodiment was, according to one textual source (Autokleides, *FGrHist* 353 F 1, quoted in Athenaeus 473B–CE), as a lidded two-handled jar decorated with white wool and filled with a mixture of pure water, olive oil, and "all fruits" (*pankarpia*). Not surprisingly, no example of such a jar has been identified. A very common find in houses, by contrast, is the small marble figure of Cybele in a little shrine: here archaeology reveals a goddess of domestic cult not so identified in literary sources. Altars too are not uncommon (Yavis 1949: 171–6). Several of normal size were found in the interior courtyards of houses in Olynthos, though it has been questioned whether the "houses" in question had purely domestic functions (Morgan 2010: 153–4). There are also miniature altars (often termed "house altars") made of terracotta or of stone and usually rectangular in shape; terracotta examples from Sicily and southern Italy are particularly well-known because many are of early date (sixth to fifth centuries) and bear impressive mythological reliefs (Fischer-Hansen 1977). Such altars are found in sanctuaries and in tombs but also in houses; good clusters from domestic contexts come, for instance, from Corinth, Olynthos (where they are often found in pairs), Thera and Delos (Krauskopf 2005). Often they have an undecorated back, which suggests that they were intended to stand against walls. Probably, given their small size, they were placed on a ledge, not directly on the ground; one in Kaulonia was found in a niche with two large jars. Normally they are uninscribed, and could have received different offerings to different gods as occasion demanded; the surface design of the Corinthian altars varies and has been thought (Williams 1979: 139–40) to imply varying functions (libations, presentation of cakes, small scale burnt offerings—the house altars were too small for full-scale sacrifice.)

Hellenistic "house altars" from Thera are an important group because, contrary to the general rule, several are inscribed; some, however, may come from sanctuaries (Hiller von Gaertringen and Wilski 1904: 153–4 and 173–5). Miletus too has yielded numerous small inscribed altars, many of which are likely to come from houses (*IMilet* 6.1.275-89 and many of *IMilet* 6.3.1226-322); but, frustratingly, their provenance is never secure. The Theran altars mostly have *eschara* (hearth) form, i.e., a flat base surrounded by raised sides. One single house yielded altars to Zeus Ktesios, Hestia and Zeus Soter, an uninscribed specimen, and (strikingly) king Ptolemy II, the Saviour Gods and Arsinoe Philadelphos. From other sites came altars to Agathos Daimon (two times), Agathos Daimon and Agathe Tyche, Hestia (four times), Hermes, Thundering and Lightening Zeus, Zeus Who Comes Down (Kataibates: i.e., the thunderbolt), Zeus Soter and Agathos Daimon, Zeus Soter (two times; two rough plaques bore the same name), supposedly Hero, Stropheus, Tyche (three times), Hygieia. One uninscribed specimen depicts Hermes and Herakles, another a cornucopia and perhaps a snake. From the gods in this list Hestia, Zeus Ktesios, Zeus Soter and Agathos Daimon have already been mentioned above as honored within the house. Stropheus is presumably Hermes Strophaios, god of the turning doorpost, a familiar domestic god in a slightly new guise. The two altars to a Zeus associated with lightning might commemorate actual strikes, or could perhaps have been prophylactic. The altar to "Hero" was certainly found in a house, and is interpreted as "protecting hero of the house"; it would provide important confirmation that heroes sometimes had that role, but the reading is uncertain. Interesting and unexpected is the monarch Ptolemy II. This altar bears a dedicator's name and is probably an expression of private devotion, but one should remember that the whole citizen body might be required to make modest offerings to Hellenistic monarchs on small altars outside their houses (Robert 1966) (yet more striking evidence for the inseparability of private and public). The altars to Hygieia are likely from their find context to have come from her sanctuary. The Theran altars extend our picture of domestic religion somewhat (on one island at least), but do not support Plato's picture of a riot of uncontrolled innovation.

The archaeology of Roman domestic religion is much richer. A place of domestic cult is commonly and conveniently described as a *lararium*, even though the word first occurs in the third century CE. *Lararia* range in scale from simple paintings of two dancing Lares, often with the Genius (in human or snake form) between them, via niches with painted Lares but space also for statuettes of Penates, other sacred objects, and an altar, to (in rich houses) whole rooms reserved for cult and, in the later empire, free-standing *aediculae* ("little temples") in courtyards with statues. Penates and the Genius have no separate home but lodge in the *lararia*. Kitchens are the commonest location for *lararia* but they can be found anywhere, and many houses have several, though only one normally contains Penates. The multiple *lararia* pose the most interesting problem in this area (Bodel 2008: 264–8; Dubordieu 2012: 39–40). Slaves, it is agreed, did not have Penates, but the cult of the Lares was particularly important within such religious life as they had. How did this work? Did slaves share vicariously the Lares of their masters, or was the function of the multiple *lararia* to segregate slave and free members of the household (Bodel 2008: 264–8)? The *lararium* with Penates will on this view be that for the free. Since one household could include several different *familiae* of slaves, one can even imagine multiple *lararia* distributed among multiple *familiae*. An

alternative view distinguishes between a principal *lararium*, that in the kitchen, and others that are secondary; but this has the weakness of making what is often the least elaborate *lararium* the most important.

In Greece, the extent of slaves' involvement in household cults may have varied according to the preferences of individual masters. Newly-bought slaves were introduced to the hearth and a newly-enslaved woman in tragedy (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1038) is told that she will soon be standing with her master's other slaves "near the altar of (Zeus) Ktesios" (but this is presented as a humiliation, not a privilege); we hear, however, of a master who was very strict in his sacrifices to Zeus Ktesios and admitted neither non-members of the kinship group nor slaves (Isaeus 8.16). There is certainly no suggestion of a separate cult for slaves. In both cultures there existed a small number of "Saturnalia-type" festivals, at which slaves were to some extent freed from normal restraints, allowed to dine with their masters, and so on. We should not imagine slaves cavorting uncontrolledly through the streets; this too was a feature of domestic religion.

The ambiguous status between private and public of religious societies joined by choice was noted above. Only a few buildings of such groups are identifiable on the ground in Greece (Aneziri 2012: 72–3), rather more in the Roman world (Bollmann 1998); at their grandest these latter could include a small temple set in a court.

Private and Public Cursing

Cursing is interesting in this perspective in several ways. The magistrates of many Greek cities pronounced public curses against a wide variety of offences: most famous are those from Teos in the early fifth century BCE against (among other things) making damaging spells (or poisons), preventing the import of corn, betrayal, piracy (Meiggs and Lewis 1988, no. 30 with *SEG* 31.985). Private individuals also uttered curses, with varying degrees of formality and seriousness. But much better known, because archaeologically abundantly attested over many centuries and from many regions, is the practice of inscribing "binding spells" against enemies, so called because they typically seek to "bind" the tongue, mind, limbs, life, activity and so on of the target. Binding spells are normally inscribed on lead tablets and deposited in graves or wells or other places supposed to give access to the underworld powers to whom, or through whom, they bind the victim. In principle, therefore, they are not just private (and anonymous—only the victim is normally named) but invisible. Plato, however, when discussing such spells, speaks of the fear created by the sight of "wax images at doors or crossroads or the tombs of one's parents" (*Laws* 933B). Possibly, therefore, there were ways of hinting to an enemy that he or she was under attack. The typical binding spell assails the enemy or rival without giving any reason. But a small class has been isolated and given the name "prayers for justice", in which the author of the spell explains a wrong which he or she has suffered. A special group of "prayers for justice" are those found in the nineteenth century in the precinct of Demeter in Cnidus (*IKnidos* 147–59): here the author (always a woman, who may give her name) does not "bind" the enemy but "dedicates" him or her to Demeter for ferocious punishment until a wrong done (theft of property, for instance; the property too can be "dedicated") is righted; occasionally, the tablet may contain a conditional curse against the author herself in the event that a particular assertion made

against her is true. These tablets are made of lead in the usual way but in some cases published drawings (the originals are now too decayed for study) display holes which suggest that they were not buried but fastened on a wall; and that is what the internal logic of the texts, with their appeals for return of stolen property and self-vindications against slander, also seems to require. It has been suggested that the cult of Demeter provided an extra-legal forum in which women could exploit group opinion to right wrongs done to them, initially orally alone but eventually in this written form (Faraone 2011). Comparable is the practice known from villages of eastern Lydia and western Phrygia of "raising a sceptre" in protest against an injury (Gordon 2004). Cursing, then, has both public and private forms, but the private form in turn divides into one that is clandestine and socially disapproved (however widely practiced) and another that, by contrast, appeals both to the gods and, through them, to public opinion.

Where the Public Dimension is Invisible

The archaeology of religion predominantly relates to public religion. Temples and sanctuaries are easy to detect and have been much excavated; habitation sites have been investigated less, and the religious elements within them are harder to isolate. A striking exception to the general pattern is Olynthus, far pre-eminent among Greek sites for the information it provides about housing but devoid of temples and substantial sanctuaries. The question must be whether, quite exceptionally, the Olynthians did without public religious spaces of the familiar type (so Morgan 2010: 159–60), or these lay outside the excavated area. It is also notoriously difficult to detect communal religion in Greece before the upsurge of sanctuary sites in the eighth century BCE. The issues are much too complicated to discuss here (Guggisberg 2012); the whole social order of archaic Greece is involved. One model would see the public temple as in some sense the successor to the chieftain's house. But one should not take this model as postulating a simple transition from private to public. Rather, the chieftain embodies and provides a center for that which is public. In religion, there is always a public domain.

Guide to Further Reading

The problems in distinguishing "public" and "private" in Greece are identified in the essays in De Polignac and Schmitt Pantel (1998) and in Dasen and Piérart (2005), and brilliantly summed up by Schmitt Pantel (2012); for related problems in Rome see Rosenberger (2012). Several of the essays in Bodel and Olyan (2008) raise similar issues in English. The varying degrees of publicity of Greek "public" rites are discussed by Jameson (1999). Jameson (1990) and Parker (2005: 9–49) survey Greek domestic religion, and Bodel (2008) and Dubordieu (2012) Roman. On festivals of Saturnalia type see Versnel (1993: 136–227). Curses are collected in Gager (1992) and discussed by Eidinow (2007); the concept of "prayers for justice" was introduced by Versnel (1993). The title of Mazarakis Ainian (1997) explains its thesis about the origins of public cult in Greece. *ThesCRA* 8: 1–245 is devoted to "public and private space".

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PART II

Embodiment

CHAPTER 6

Amulets

*Gideon Bohak**

Introduction

The use of amulets is a universal phenomenon in human societies from an early age until today. Its appeal lies in the assumption that certain objects have the power to protect, heal, or assist those who carry them, and from the general human need of health, protection, and success. However, the nature of the objects used, the manner of their use, the assumptions as to why they possess such powers, and the identity of their producers and users, vary greatly from one society to the next and even among specific individuals in any society. For archaeologists excavating the remains of older societies, this means that whereas some objects may be securely identified as amulets, others are much harder to classify. Thus, when one finds in a Roman-period grave in a small village in Austria remains of the body of a young child, and next to it a silver tubular case inside which is a thin sheet of gold on which is inscribed one of the most important verses from the Hebrew Bible (*Deuteronomy* 6.4), transliterated in Greek letters, one has no doubt that this object must have served as an amulet (Eshel, Eshel, and Lange 2010). But when one finds in an Early-Byzantine grave in Samaria an inscribed silver amulet in a copper case, as well as a bronze bracelet with a bell, one is less certain about the nature of this object (Müller-Kessler, Mitchell, and Hockey 2007). It could easily have served as an amulet, but could just as easily have been a piece of jewelry, devoid of any apotropaic meanings. Whereas some amulets are found in graves, presumably the graves of their owners, many others are found in random locations, such as ancient streets or the floors of ancient houses, and many more emerge on the antiquities markets without any secure provenance or provenience, further complicating our ability to study them (Gordon 2011a).

One obvious conclusion to be drawn from the above examples is the need to distinguish between inscribed amulets and uninscribed ones. The former are usually easy to identify as amulets; they also tend to be easier to interpret, since the texts upon them often

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contain important clues about their aims, and about the linguistic, religious and even social identities of their producers and users. In some cases, the texts upon these amulets are so long and detailed that they constitute important sources for the study of ancient religion and magic and of the social history of the ancient world. The latter, on the other hand, often are much more ambiguous, as they may or may not have served as amulets, and as they usually provide much less data about the identity of the persons who produced or used them. In some cases – as with many types of Egyptian amulets – their shapes and the materials of which they are made firmly place them in a wider amuletic tradition (Andrews 1994). But in many other cases, such as the amuletic uses of coins, nails, bells, rings, keys, bones, teeth, corals, and hundreds of other objects, there is nothing culture-specific about their amuletic use. Thus, when such objects are found by archaeologists and historians, their amuletic function must be deduced from other factors. Moreover, archaeologists and historians must always bear in mind that the producers and users of ancient amulets had no interest in a distinction that is of extreme importance from our perspective, namely, that between amulets made of perishable materials, and especially organic materials, and those made of more durable substances such as metals or stones. Thus, to give just one example, Suetonius (*Augustus* 90) tells us that Augustus always carried some seal-skin with him everywhere he went, as a protection against lightning. Such an amulet could be sewn to one's garments, placed in a small leather pouch worn around one's body, or placed in a metal cylinder hung around one's neck (and, in the case of a Roman emperor, it could have been a larger piece, carried by one of his attendants). In the first two cases, nothing would remain two thousand years later; in the third, the archaeologist would find an empty tube, with or without its suspension cord, but without the seal-skin it had once contained, as this would have disintegrated long ago.

While the example of Augustus' seal-skin should make us painfully aware of the fact that most ancient amulets perished soon after their use, we must also keep in mind two attenuating circumstances. The first is that ancient writers often discuss the use of amulets, and provide invaluable information about who used them and how, about who produced them, and about the cultural assumptions that lay behind their production. Even non-literary sources provide much useful information here, as may be seen, for example, from those "Fayyum mummy portraits" where the deceased persons are seen wearing the amulets they used to carry on their necks in their daily lives (e.g., Walker and Bierbrier 1997: 101–2 (no. 94); 113–4 (no. 109)). The second is that while many amulets were made of perishable materials and vanished long ago, in a few cases the dry climate of certain regions assured the preservation of amulets that would have perished in any other location. A well-known example of this exception is the preservation in many places in Egypt of Greek amulets written with ink on papyrus. These amulets must have been as popular in Rome or Antioch as they were in Oxyrrhynchus, but the climate in the former two cities was unfavorable to their preservation, and so it is to Egypt that we must turn in order to see what such amulets would have looked like. Another example is a batch of three amulets written on parchment in the Syriac (Aramaic) language, probably coming from somewhere in Mesopotamia or Persia, which happened to have been preserved (Gignoux 1987). A lesser-known example comes from one of the caves in the Judaean Desert, where a child's sleeveless shirt was found among the remains of Jewish refugees who hid there during the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE). This was no ordinary shirt, however, as it had several "pouches" on its lower edge, made by stuffing certain

small objects into the shirt's fabric and tying cords around the protrusion. When opened, these pouches turned out to contain an unusual assortment of shells, seeds, salt crystals and various other substances (Yadin 1971: 79–82). Any child wearing this garment would have been quite annoyed by such pouches with hard objects dangling from his shirt, but apparently his or her parents ascribed some apotropaic value to these inconvenient protrusions, and insisted on their importance. And as there is nothing specifically Jewish about this practice (and the pouches themselves are quite similar to some of the Roman *bullae*), archaeologists and historians may only speculate about how widespread the use of such amuletic shirts was elsewhere in the Greco-Roman world, in regions where woven fabrics rotted long ago.

With such introductory notes in mind, we may approach the evidence in a more systematic manner. To do so, we shall first examine the evidence for uninscribed amulets, then the evidence for inscribed amulets, and then turn to three related issues: the amulets' physical use (or embodiment), the metaphysical assumptions undergirding the recourse to amulets in antiquity, and the social realia lying behind them and sometimes reflected by them.

Uninscribed Amulets

Looking at ancient amulets, we may broadly divide the uninscribed amulets into two distinct types. On the one hand, there were many substances that were deemed to be amuletic in their natural state, such as the above-mentioned seal-skin, or numerous other animal, vegetal, or mineral substances that were deemed to be effective against demons, diseases, the evil eye and other sources of danger. On the other hand, there were many apotropaic objects whose power resided in the symbols they displayed or in their religious values, which often were culturally specific.

On the "natural" side, the list of substances that could serve as amulets is almost endless. If we take Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* as a useful point of departure, we may note dozens of items whose apotropaic value was noted by this first-century AD Roman gentleman-scholar. Seals are never harmed by lightning (2.146), and their skins can be sewn together to make lightning-proof tents, a claim that fits well with Augustus' travel habits. Beetles are hung round children's necks as amulets (11.97). The right canine tooth of a wolf is said to be valuable as an amulet (11.166; cf. 28.257). A part of the core of the palm fruit is used as an amulet against witchcraft (13.40). The *aetites* ("eagle stone"), when wrapped in the skins of animals that have been sacrificed, prevents miscarriages among pregnant women and quadriped animals (36.151). And so on, with almost any imaginable substance finding its amuletic use. Almost five centuries later, the Greek physician Alexander of Tralles offers many similar bits of medico-magical advice, usually under the sub-heading of *physika*, i.e., "natural" treatments. The *aetites*, when worn as an amulet, is effective against many illnesses, including periodic shivering, and especially against daily fevers (Alexander Trallianus, *On fever* = *Works*, vol. 1, p. 407 Puschmann). The dung-beetle, taken alive and wrapped in a red cloth as an amulet around the patient's neck, heals quartan fever, and it is said that the down from the cheek of a he-goat also cures it (1.437). To cure epilepsy, bind a crucifixion-nail around the patient's arm as an amulet (1.567). Such lists go on and on, and many of the specific recommendations

recur in very different textual corpora; the Jewish rabbis, for example, were well aware of the amuletic uses of crucifixion nails and foxes' teeth and debated their permissibility (*Mishna, Shabbat* 6.10), and Shenoute, the Coptic abbot, railed against a person who tied a snake head on his hand, a crocodile tooth on his arm, and a fox claw on his leg, and then claimed that a monk had recommended their amuletic use (Frankfurter 2000: 474). Such correspondences clearly show that these amulets remained in common use for many centuries, over large geographical areas and across several cultures.

Inscribed Amulets

Moving from "natural" to inscribed amulets, we may note five main types that were popular in the Greco-Roman world. One type was the inscribed papyri, which were briefly mentioned above; these must have been extremely popular, papyrus being the cheapest mass-produced writing material in antiquity and the easiest one to write on, but they have only been preserved in the dry sands of Egypt. Such amulets were rolled into a metal tube or folded into a pouch, and worn around one's body. A second type was the inscribed *lamellae*, i.e., thin sheets of bronze, silver, gold, or other metals on which a text was inscribed with a sharp stylus or a nail, usually on one side only, and then rolled and placed in a metal tube, or simply rolled around a cord by which it could be worn around one's body. A third type was inscribed metal or glass pendants, often cast into a mold and produced in large quantities, and usually supplied with a suspension loop which allowed for their hanging around one's body. The fourth type of inscribed amulets consisted of "magical gems," i.e., semi-precious stones on which a text, and often an image as well, was engraved with special equipment. These gems were either placed in pouches and worn around one's body, or suspended on one's body with a cord or necklace that passed through a hole that was drilled unto them, or set into rings and worn on one's fingers. And, finally, in some cases a metal ring, or a bracelet, were engraved with a text or an image, and thus served as amulets even without a gem. To these five main types, several others could be added, such as inscribed bones or wooden tablets but, given their production on organic materials, not many specimens of such amulets have reached us.

As the above list makes clear, when it came to inscribed amulets, the material of which they were made often was of lesser importance, since it was the text upon them that really mattered. Papyrus was not credited with special apotropaic value, it was simply readily available and easy to write on; and the choice between bronze and gold *lamellae*, for example, probably had little to do with the specific affliction bothering the client and much more to do with his financial circumstances. The only exception here are the magical gems, where one can clearly see that the choice of which gem to use was related to the amulet's aim, with hematite often used to stop bleeding (see below), green stones used for belly problems (apparently because of the color of stomach juices), and so on (see Mastrocinque 2011).

While the writing surface was of lesser importance, the inscribed text was of the greatest significance. Its length was partly determined by external limitations, as it is much easier to write long texts on metal *lamellae* than on semi-precious gems, but clearly was a matter of choice as well. Some metal *lamellae* carry a single word, while others carry much longer texts (see Kotansky 1994 for numerous examples). The contents

of these inscriptions vary greatly; the shorter ones may contain a single "magic word" or "magic sign" or a vowel sequence (on which more below), or a simple command such as "digest" on magical gems against indigestion, or a brief acclamation such as "One Zeus Sarapis". The longest ones may contain elaborate prayers, several sets of anti-demonic adjurations, mythical narratives, poetic hymns, and so on. Jewish and Christian amulets also contain biblical references and allusions, and even small bits of liturgical or apocryphal texts (Kotansky, Naveh, and Shaked 1992).

In addition to the texts, some inscribed amulets also contain images. This rarely happens with the papyrus amulets or the metal *lamellae*, but is very common when it comes to magical gems and amuletic pendants. The images on these objects vary greatly, and may include images of the "pagan" gods such as Zeus or Sarapis, images of newfangled deities, such as the so-called "Anguiped" figure, with a human body, a cock's head and snake legs, or the Egyptian Bes-"Pantheos" figure, with a human body and numerous different heads. Occasionally, one finds a more complex iconography, sometimes even depicting several different scenes on a single magical gem (see Michel 2004).

Embodiment: The Physical Uses of Amulets in Antiquity

In a memorable scene in the epic film *Ben-Hur* (MGM 1959), the main protagonist is about to compete in a fierce chariot race against his former friend and current enemy, the Roman Messala. His patron, the Arab Sheikh Ilderim, gives him an amulet shaped like a Star of David. The amulet's form is a complete anachronism, but the suggestion that a charioteer about to compete in the races might be wearing some amulet is not entirely far-fetched. Thus embodiment – the manner of wearing amulets – becomes an important issue.

Looking at the commonest Greek terms for amulets, *periamma* (or *periapton*) and *phylaktêrion*, we note that the second term, derived from the verb *phylassô*, "to guard, defend", refers to their aim, whilst the former refers to their mode of use. They normally were fastened (as signified by the verb *aptô*) around (*peri*) the person or animal they sought to protect. There were, of course, many apotropaic devices for the protection of houses, temples, agricultural fields and other enclosed and open spaces (see Faraone 1992), but these probably should not be classified as "amulets" in the narrower sense of the word. Similarly, the drawing or tattooing of apotropaic signs on one's body, which are well attested in the Greco-Roman world (and might even be attested on the body of Ötzi, the Ice Age man discovered frozen in the Alps!), could hardly count as amulets in the narrower sense of the word.

The fastening of an amulet to a human or animal body could take place in three main contexts. In many cases, the amulet was an all-purpose apotropaic device, presumably worn by its owner all the time – hung on one's neck, worn as a ring on one's finger, or tucked away, and even sewn into, one's garments. Children, for example, often wore such amulets, as is demonstrated by both literary and archaeological evidence (Dasen 2003; cf. *Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin* 73b).

All-purpose amulets were extremely common in the Greco-Roman world, but there also were many purpose-specific amulets, and especially those with a medical aim used for the healing of one illness or the solution of one medical crisis. These amulets often were worn as closely as possible to the affected limb, as may be seen from the rabbis' references to placing a coin on a gouty limb (*Mishna, Shabbat* 6.6), from Galen's experiments with green jaspers which he hung around his neck in such a way that they would reach his stomach (see below), and from the numerous references to placing "quick-birth" amulets on the parturient woman's abdomen or thigh to make her delivery quicker. Such amulets would surely be worn only as the need arose, and would be taken off when no longer needed. This is especially true of "quick-birth" amulets, the instructions for whose preparations recurrently insist that they must be removed once the baby is out, lest the woman's uterus and intestine fall out of her body as well.

A third type of amulets, probably much less common than the first two, consisted of non-medical but occasion-specific amulets, used by people in situations of risk and uncertainty such as appearing before a king or a magistrate, setting out on a voyage, competing in an *agôn*, fighting in a war, summoning potentially dangerous supernatural forces (if you were a practicing magician), or uprooting a dangerous plant (if you were an expert rhizotomist). Pliny, for example, explains about the great powers of a certain "snakes' egg", much admired by the Druids, a specimen of which he saw himself, and adds that the emperor Cladius once executed a Roman *eques* for carrying such an egg upon him during a law-suit, no doubt for amuletic purposes (*Natural History* 29.52–4). Josephus, a few decades later, explains that the safest way to uproot the *Baaras* plant, which has wonderful exorcistic qualities but is extremely dangerous to those who uproot it, is to approach it while holding another *Baaras* root in one's hand (*The Jewish War* 7.180–5). Thus, while we should not think of a first-century Jewish charioteer wearing the Star of David, we may certainly think of him, or of his non-Jewish colleagues and competitors, adopting the suggestion that the largest teeth of wolves, when tied to horses, give them inexhaustible running powers (Pliny, *Natural History* 28.257).

Once amulets were no longer in use, either because the problem they sought to solve had been solved or because their owners passed away, they could, in theory at least, be passed on to other persons with similar needs. When a child grew too big for his amuletic T-shirt it was probably inherited by his younger siblings, and when an engraved gem helped one woman give birth it could easily be passed on to another. The only amulets that could not easily be recycled were those produced for a specific individual, whose name was written on the amulet itself. And yet, we often find amulets, both "personalized" and "generic", in graves, which might mean that there was a certain reluctance to re-use the amulets of dead people, or that the amulets were meant to protect them even in the grave (and cf. the old Egyptian practice of placing amulets on mummies, well-attested in the Greco-Roman period as well). Returning to the Halbturn amulet with which we began this survey, we may note that it could easily have been passed on to another user, or even smelted in order to produce some other golden object, and yet it was buried in a grave. What notions of life after death lie behind such practices is not entirely clear, but embodiment, it would seem, sometimes applied even to the decomposing body of the dead.

The Theoretical Foundations of the Use of Amulets in Antiquity

The ubiquity of amulets in the Greco-Roman world is hardly in doubt, and this in itself suffices to prove that they were deemed to be effective protectors against dangerous forces. But why were they deemed powerful, and where, from the perspective of their producers and users, did these powers come from? To answer such questions, we must examine both the archaeological record and the literary evidence, which complement each other in telling us not only *what* people did, but also *why* they did it.

When it comes to uninscribed amulets, the main factor determining the theory of their efficacy was the material of which they were made, and its supposed "natural" qualities. Reverting to Pliny's *Natural History*, we may note that his numerous accounts of the apotropaic qualities of specific substances usually offer no explanations of the causes of this efficacy. In some cases, Pliny distances himself from the claims he surveys, by noting that "it is said" that a certain material is effective as an amulet (see, e.g., 28.257), or by attributing such claims to specific users, such as the Persian Magi (e.g., 30.19–20) or Zachalias the Babylonian (37.169). He also castigates the Magi for some of their claims, and says that his own text will "expose" their falsehood (e.g., 37.54; 118; 124; 192). But in other cases he simply reports the facts, without casting any doubt on their veracity but also without offering any explanation of why the amulets might be effective. It is thus left to the modern historian to speculate about the underlying assumptions, especially by adducing comparable uses in related corpora, such as the writings of ancient physicians (Gordon 2007).

While the exact logic behind each amuletic praxis is beyond our reach, some general patterns do emerge from the available evidence. In some cases, amuletic practices were grounded in wider theories of sympathy and antipathy, such as the well-known Greek and Roman assumption of a great antipathy between snakes and deer (e.g., Lucretius 6.765; Pliny, *Natural History* 8.118; Martial 2.29.5; Aelian, *De natura animalium* 2.9; Oppian, *Cynegetica* 2.233–41; etc.) which made deer-parts obviously useful as amulets against snake-bites. In others, they were connected with the physical qualities of the materials involved, such as the redness of moistened ground hematite powder, which gave this stone its name and made it seem useful for amulets against bleedings (Mastrocinque 2011; Faraone 2011).

The theory of sympathy and antipathy, and the notion that like cures like, offered a kind of "map" in which one substance could be related to another substance, an animal, a natural phenomenon, a medical condition, and so on, and thus provided a possible explanation for the efficacy of numerous amulets (Gordon 1997: 134–9). Such theories could even receive a philosophical framework, as may be seen in the works of Plotinus (e.g., *Enneades* 4.4.40). However, other theories were also in vogue. As an example of a more "scientific" explanation, we may note the complex attitudes towards amulets displayed by ancient physicians. Soranus, in his treatise on gynecology, insists that amulets do not really help but acknowledges their psychological importance – what we would call the placebo effect – and therefore suggests that a physician should not make his patients take their amulets off (*Gynaeceia* 3.42.3; *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* 4.47.17; 121.26). Galen, the greatest physician of the Roman Empire, was a vehement opponent

of inscribed amulets, whose use he saw as a sign of mere human superstition. In one famous passage, he explains how he had proven that uninscribed green jaspers are just as effective as the inscribed ones in healing aching bellies (*On the Powers of Simple Remedies* 10.19; see Bonner 1950: 54–6). And as for why the uninscribed gems were effective, in another famous passage Galen explains how he experimented upon an epileptic boy with an amulet made of peony root hung around the boy's neck. As long as the root was there, the boy had no epileptic fits, but when Galen removed the amulet, the boy was seized by a severe attack. Galen was therefore convinced that the amulet actually worked, but he hastened to add an explanation of why this is so. In his view, the peony root emits small particles which the epileptic patient inhales, and it is these particles that keep the disease at bay (*On the Powers of Simple Remedies* 6.3.10). Thus, we see how even one of the most "scientific" writers of the ancient world had no doubt that amulets, or at least some amulets, actually do work, and offered an atomistic explanation of why this is so.

Another set of uninscribed amulets derived its power less from the materials of which they were made and more from their symbolic and religious values. Thus we learn that some of the soldiers of Judas Maccabaeus carried statuettes of the gods of Iamneia under their garments when heading into battle (*2 Maccabees* 12.39–42), and that Sulla, the famous Roman general, always went into battle with a small golden statue of Apollo, from Delphi, tied around his bosom (Plutarch, *Sulla* 29.6; Turcan 2003). Sometimes the amulets had less to do with the divine world and more with the human one, as is the case with the numerous phallic statuettes that clearly served an apotropaic function, and were particularly favored by the Romans (McDaniel 1948: 536). Similarly, there is some evidence of coins being reused as amulets, and our literary sources suggest that it was especially Alexander the Great, the greatest military leader of the ancient world, whose coins were particularly prized for reuse as amulets (see Maguire 1997; Fulghum 2001).

In addition to objects that had "natural" apotropaic powers, or were part of a wider "religious" tradition, many amulets would have acquired their powers during the process of their preparation and consecration. In the Greek magical papyri, we often find instructions to take a certain substance, manipulate it in special ways, recite special incantations over it, and in so doing turn it into a powerful amulet. Similar instructions may be found in ancient books of herbal lore, where one is told of the powers of many plants – including, of course, the peony – but also of the care one needs to take when uprooting such plants (e.g., at night, when the moon is waxing, and only with the left hand) and when preparing them for their amuletic use.

When we turn from the uninscribed amulets to those that carry inscriptions and/or images, the picture clearly changes. As we saw above, in these cases the materials on which they are inscribed tend to be less important, since their power is deemed to derive mainly from the texts and images that they display. And when we begin reading these texts, we find ourselves in a world populated by malevolent forces such as demons, witchcraft, or the evil eye, but these forces can be addressed, adjured, threatened, and even insulted in an effort to thwart them. Moreover, these texts often appeal to other supernatural forces, such as gods, angels, and other superhuman beings who are enlisted into the fight against the sources of danger. There are other forces, too, such as those that were deemed to lie in certain "magic words", in certain "magic signs" (that often went by the name *charaktêres*), and even in the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet, whose series and permutations were apparently credited with great powers (Frankfurter

1994; Gordon 2011b). All these forces do not necessarily fit into a theologically systematic worldview, but rather point to the amulet producers' desire to thwart whichever evil forces might be pestering their clients, and to seek superhuman assistance wherever it might be found.

It is thus clear that, throughout antiquity, there never was one over-arching theory of amuletic powers, nor a single explanation for the effectiveness of amulets. This, of course, is one reason why they were so ubiquitous, as it was almost impossible to prove that they were all ineffective, and many of the premises of those who used them were shared even by those who did not. Moreover, while there were no systematic efforts to test the effectiveness of amulets, Galen's example shows that some people did try to verify that amulets really work, and were satisfied with the results. This may also be seen from the Jewish rabbis' decision that an amulet may be carried around on the Sabbath, when one may only carry one's essential clothing, if it has healed three times (*Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 61a–b). What exactly would pass as a "healing" the rabbis never explain, but it is clear that if the producers and the users of amulets were convinced that they really worked, the rabbis would share that conviction. And that they were not alone in this may be seen from an example adduced by Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 200 CE). To demonstrate that some things are beyond human comprehension, he notes that amulets and incantations are known to work, even though no one really knows why (*On Fate* 8,174).

The Sociology of Ancient Amulets

Amulets in the Greco-Roman world came in many different forms and were used in many different contexts. Some were intended for general protection and were worn around one's body for long periods of time, whilst others were case-specific and worn when the need arose. Thus, while most types of amulets were shared by all members of society, some were more narrowly distributed, and were used exclusively by children, pregnant women, soldiers, travelers, athletes, and members of other social groups. And both the literary sources and the archaeological evidence agree that the amulets' users came from all social strata, from the humble roots and stones worn by some peasants to the elaborate gold *lamellae* or exquisitely carved magical gems that clearly were limited only to the well-to-do, and all the way to the likes of Sulla and Augustus. But this leads us to an important point with regards to ancient amulets, namely the distinction between their users and their producers. In most cases, no specialized knowledge or training was needed to produce an amulet, since everyone knew that the tooth of a fox or a wolf is an effective amulet. But some amulets demanded greater expertise, and their production clearly was limited to specialists. This certainly is true of the inscribed *lamellae*, whose producers had to know *how* to scratch tiny letters upon thin sheets of metal, and had to know *what* to scratch upon them. And it is even more true when it comes to the magical gems, whose production entailed both the highly technical art of engraving small images and tiny letters on hard gemstones, and the knowledge of which images and texts to engrave for which purposes; such gems may even have been produced by teams of experts, one to do the design, another to cut the actual stone.

When looking at any specific *lamella* or magical gem, we can sometimes read the client's name upon the amulet, or tell what kind of danger he or she may have been facing.

But the identity of the amulet's producer remains elusive, and all we know for certain is his (or her?) linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with amulets in Greek, Latin, Aramaic (in several different dialects and scripts), Hebrew (in the Jewish and the Samaritan scripts), Persian, Coptic, and so on. But when we look at many such amulets at once, we can easily see that amulets produced thousands of miles apart bear a remarkable similarity to each other, and often use the same, or very similar, magic words and signs, the same images, and the same types of texts. This must mean that many of these amulets were not produced according to their producers' whims, but in line with the instructions found in written, and sometimes even illustrated, manuals. And as many of the said magic words and signs may be discovered in the recipe books found among the so-called Greek magical papyri (see Betz 1986), we may use these papyri, which have been preserved only in Egypt, to imagine what some magical handbooks would have looked like even outside Egypt. These handbooks are not very generous in providing data about their own producers and users, and so we must complement the data they provide with data from other sources. This combined picture reveals that some of the amulet-makers must have been priests and cult-leaders, be they Egyptian priests in search of a livelihood at a time when the Egyptian temples were in decline (Frankfurter 1998), temple officials in various shrines who sought to use their ritual expertise for the production of amulets, or Jewish and Christian ritual experts who prepared amulets for members of their congregations and for outsiders as well. But other producers may have been physicians, who – like Alexander of Tralles – supplemented their "scientific" treatments with more "natural" ones, and recommended, and presumably produced, various types of amulets. Sometimes such producers even sent recipes to each other, as may be deduced from a papyrus note of the third century CE that reads: "The amulet against tonsillitis for the gold *lamella* – send it to Sarmates, having copied it on a slip of papyrus word for word" (Daniel and Maltomini 1990–2: no. 5).

What all this tells us is that the production of amulets was a highly diverse affair, carried out on many different levels. The child's amuletic shirt which we mentioned above may have been produced by the child's mother, but the gold *lamella* from Halbturn was probably produced by a Jewish expert, who knew what to write on such an amulet and insisted that his amulets were better than those of other experts. We can thus imagine the world of ancient amulet producers, competing with each other for clients and trying to differentiate themselves from the competition by offering more effective, or more affordable, amulets. But we should also keep in mind the ideological agendas that sometimes lay behind the production and dissemination of these objects. These agendas came into force when local shrines offered cult-mementos as amulets, be it the statues of the gods of Iamneia, the statues of Delphic Apollo, or the statues of the "newly-discovered" god Glykon which his promoter, Alexander of Abonuteichos, was distributing as one more manner of winning fame and adherents (Lucian, *Alexander* 18). Such practices became even more pronounced when missionary religions, and especially Christianity, used the apotropaic value of their great leaders, of their sacred objects and of their sacred texts to win new converts and keep them within the fold. This is manifest in the proliferation of early Christian amulets (see Spier 2007; De Bruyn and Dijkstra 2011), in spite the Church Fathers' mixed feelings towards the use of sacred texts and objects for such mundane needs (Stander 1993).

Conclusion

To end our brief survey of a large topic, we may note once again that amulets were an extremely common feature of the Greco-Roman world; they were used by people from every rung of the social ladder and for many different purposes. Some were produced by common people for their own use, but others were produced by experts who served their clients for a fee, or by religious entrepreneurs in search of new followers. Some were extremely durable and survived in great numbers, whilst others were far more fragile and decomposed long ago, with only one or two specimens, or none at all, available in our archaeological records. And yet, whenever we can compare the archaeological and the literary remains of the Greco-Roman world we can see that, when used cautiously, both types of sources complement each other in offering a remarkably detailed image of the use of amulets in the Greco-Roman world.

Guide to Further Reading

Useful introductions to ancient magic, including numerous references to amulets, may be found in Brashear (1995), Graf (1997), Dickie (2001), and Bohak (2008). An excellent introduction to the archaeology of magic may be found in Merrifield (1987), even though most of his specific examples belong to the medieval and early modern periods. For useful analyses of the archaeological contexts of amulets excavated in late-Roman and early-Byzantine contexts, see Russell (1995) and Mitchell (2007), and cf. Gordon (2011a). The most important corpus of Greek amulets is Kotansky (1994), and Kotansky (1991) offers a solid introduction. Most of the Aramaic amulets are edited in Naveh and Shaked (1985 and 1993). For the Coptic evidence, see Meyer and Smith (1994). For the magical gems, Bonner's classic monograph (1950) may be supplemented with Michel (2004), Nagy (2002), and Spier (2007). The Greek magical papyri are easily accessible in Betz (1986) and in Daniel and Maltomini (1990–2).

NOTE

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CHAPTER 7

Dress and Ornaments

Laura Gawlinski

Introduction

Dress is part of a complicated system of non-verbal communication. Clothing and accessories can mark gender, age, status, and situation; this external display can make visible the qualities that can be difficult to recognize otherwise, such as piety or marital eligibility (Arthur 1999). What is presented on the exterior is not an exact projection of the interior, however, but a choreographed decision on the part of the wearer, a combination of personal choice and social expectations: clothing exists somewhere between the communal and the individual. Because much of ancient religious ritual was social and public, it provided an opportunity for at least two levels of communication through dress. The first relates to the religious atmosphere: choosing an item to wear because it is proper, for example, for a festival to Demeter, or because you are the priestess. The other is more social: choosing garments based on class or status. These two aspects of dress cannot be separated, and both could be at work in a single ritual setting and even a single outfit.

It is a commonplace that modern religious groups or individuals use dress to set themselves apart from the secular world or even members of their own community but, by comparison, the use of clothing in the ancient world was more subtle. For the Greek world, some scholars maintain there was no set priestly dress (Miller 1989), and even those who do find such evidence describe a costume that is context-specific (a particular festival requiring specific garments) or vague (only a certain level of cost and decoration required across the board) (Connelly 2007: 84–115; Von den Hoff 2008). For example, priestesses are recognizable on Athenian gravestones by the key that they carry, not their clothing, and the loose tunic associated with priests is not depicted as worn invariably by them. Some religious functionaries were designated by features of their dress,

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such as the reddish-purple cloaks (*phoinikides*) and twisted head band (*strophion*) worn by the hierophant of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Most worshippers simply wore "best dress" and a wreath on the head at festival time. References to initiates wearing white are common, and the color served to represent their ritual status as well as create visible conformity to encourage community cohesion (as the crowds of Isis initiates are described; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.10). Change of ritual status could become detectable through a change of clothes, as is the case in one ritual in which initiates replaced their tiaras (*stlengides*) with wreaths as a symbol of their initiation (*IG* 5,1 1390, lines 13–15).

The sources used to uncover this physical, visual aspect of ancient lived religious experience are fraught with complications. Our main sources of information about clothing are secondary, at best: textual and art historical. Epigraphy provides more information about color and types of garments than excavated objects. Few textiles are preserved from the ancient Mediterranean because of climate, and those that have lasted are incomplete, not in a religious context, or belong to specific times and places (e.g., Coptic priestly garments) that are so specific as to be difficult to extrapolate from. In this chapter I present three case studies that demonstrate some of the ways clothing worked in religious contexts. All three cases concern "art" objects, but what makes their interpretation relevant for our purposes is that all are from a known archaeological context that is religious in some way.

Figure 7.1 Horseman IV.8 of the west frieze of the Parthenon wearing Thracian-style *alopekis* and riding boots along with a *chlamys*. Photograph by Walter Hege, courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute (D-DAI-ATH-Hege 1986).

In addition to the questions posed below, three larger interpretive issues should be kept in mind:

1. Representation vs. reality: observing ancient rituals and peoples through the artifacts they created is obviously not the same as first-hand viewing. We must constantly question how far lived reality might be from the representation of that reality, in addition to recognizing the possibility of different realities from different points of view.
2. Changing contexts and audiences: multiple ritual events are often implied in a single artifact. In addition, an artifact has multiple phases in its life span: there are the original choices by the creator(s), subsequent primary use and display of the object, and then changes over time through new audiences and users.
3. Gender imbalance: a focus on the clothed body adds to the discussion of religion in another important way: it is markedly gendered. This is not only true for the ancient attention to clothing – which can be seen, for example, in clothing regulations – but it has also resulted in scholarship that is further gendered: the topic is often attached to studies of women. Examining clothing and religion, then, can bring the gendered nature of ancient religion further into focus and highlight how gender informs an individual's lived experience (see Chapter 9).

Which Clothes? Specialty Garments and the Parthenon Frieze

The earliest scholarship on ancient dress focused on *realia*: types of garments, how they were worn, and what Greek and Latin terminology should be applied (Lee 2012: 265–8). Grounding in close observation of the details of garments remains necessary even as the field has expanded to include more semantic and socio-historical interests. This is especially true for the Greek world, in which the method of marking difference – particularly religious difference – was fairly nuanced. Once the dress has been identified, the question becomes one of interpretation: How can we know how special garments are being used?

The location of the Ionic frieze on the Parthenon (carved ca. 438–432 BCE) on a temple, in a sanctuary, firmly marks its environment as religious. Although there are arguments about the meaning of the representation, the ritual depicted is without a doubt a procession (Brommer 1977; Jenkins 1994; Connelly 1996; Neils 2001). Although often viewed as a preliminary to a ritual (sacrifice, burial, wedding, etc.), a procession is itself a ritual, and perhaps one of the most public and communal. As a visual performance, external trappings like clothing play an important role. How closely this image reflected the particulars of an actual procession at any particular time is debatable: it is certainly a constructed, idealized image. As such, it cannot be treated as a photograph, but it can be mined for information about how the Athenians wished to be seen. The depiction indicates that dressing for the procession ritual was a crucial preparatory action and that clothing was a way to mark participants.

As the Acropolis is entered from the west, the west end of the Parthenon would be the first viewed by the visitor, and this is the point at which the procession depicted on the Ionic frieze begins. With its horsemen and marshals, it can be associated with the cavalry processions of the south and north. Unlike those processions on the long sides, however,

the stream of action is paused several times, emphasizing that this is a starting point or a scene of preliminaries. This preparation continues into the beginning of the north frieze, unifying the two. What makes these preparations stand out for our purposes is that one of the most salient images of preparation is dress. Starting at the point that seems to be the beginning – the southwest corner – we find two figures not yet on horseback facing south (the opposite direction of most other figures) (scenes XV.29 and XVI.30, see Brommer 1977). XVI.30 stands with his outstretched left arm draped in his *chlamys*, a short cloak; with his left hand he reaches beneath the garment to put it on. Eventually it will look like that of his companions who wear their *chlamides* with their clasp at the neck, the fabric thrown over their backs. Next to him, XV.29 – whose horse, carved behind him, faces the opposite direction – bends over, left foot on a rectangular stone (possibly a mounting block). His *chlamys* slides to his left as he stretches to tie his sandal; the straps would have been added in paint or a material no longer preserved. The viewer walking northward would meet this scene again: figure VI.12, although he wears a crested helmet and has no horse, performs the same action of facing south and propping his foot on a stone to tie his sandal. Another scene of dressing is found on the continuation on the north (XLVII.135–136). Here a youth (136), nude except for a mantle thrown over his left shoulder, stands behind an older man (135) wearing a tunic that is bound at the waist. The position of the youth's hands indicates he is helping the man dress, cinching this belt; the mantle he carries is likely intended to be added next.

It has been shown that elements of clothing adjustment and even references to clothing itself (e.g., the presentation of the cloth on the east) are a unifying element of the frieze (Neils 1996). The choice of the artists to highlight the preparatory sections of the frieze through dressing is significant. Preparation for a procession involved physical preparation through ornamentation. The types of preparations depicted underline putting on shoes, getting dressed, and adjustments, and at least one figure is depicted as requiring (or at least taking advantage of) help. The artists emphasize the commencement of this section by dressing, so that dressing is equated to preparation for a procession. This does not, of course, imply that participants in a procession arrived at the starting point in various states of undress. Rather, the choice to construct this monument using these images suggests that, in the Greek mind, special dressing was a part of the preparation for ritual activity. The religious body is a clothed body, and changing one's outer appearance through the clothing is part of the experience of ritual activity.

As for what kind of clothing might be used to enact that change, two groups on the frieze can serve as illustration. First, although the procession of men on horses along the south and north sides at first glance gives an impression of conformity, part of the success of this composition comes from variation in elements such as clothing. Some horsemen ride partially nude, others wear the *chlamys*; a few have helmets, but many have the *petasos*, the wide-brimmed hat often used by travelers. Several horsemen stand out because they wear a head covering that has been identified as Thracian: the *alopekis*, a cap with flaps, whose name suggests it was made from the pelt of a fox. On the west, it is worn by figures IV.8 and VIII.15; on the south, I.2–4, and based on the organization determined for the grouping and costuming on the north, II.5–7 would have all been dressed the same, creating a rank of six uniform horsemen.

Descriptions of Thracian costume in Herodotus (7.75) and Xenophon (*Anabasis* 7.4.4) note other distinctive elements in addition to the *alopekis*: the *zeira*, a colorful, heavy cloak, and high boots of fawn-skin. Characters of this nationality can be identified in Athenian art partly through these accessories (Tsiafakis 2000). But these men on the Parthenon are no Thracians; components of their outfit fit the Thracian repertoire, but not the entirety. The caps are worn, but not the cloaks; only a few have riding boots (e.g., IV.8 but not VIII.15), and these same boots are worn by other riders who do not wear the *alopekis* (e.g., X.19 and XI.20 on the west). By the time of the creation of the frieze, Athenians – particularly members of the cavalry, who must have found the clothing quite practical – had incorporated aspects of the Thracian costume into their dress options. This and other mixings of foreign and native elements of dress had become an Athenian costume (Cohen 2001: 247–51). That the artists of the frieze depicted these members of the procession in this way is significant. In a religious context, a person's everyday identity was not necessarily lost. The typical aspects of horsemen's dress are not represented as changing for this festival, but rather are used to mark their occupation. The sculptors intend that the audience recognize these figures as Athenian cavalry. This suggests that many of the clothing markers that appeared in a festive situation would be the same as the ones used at any other time; a person's religious experience was tied to their everyday lives. Here, the cavalry are depicted as participating *as cavalry*; this identity surely would have affected their understanding and experience of the ritual.

On the other hand, clothing could also work to mark a person's religious identity. On the east segment of the sculpture are young women, depicted in two groups approaching from the north (thirteen figures) and the south (sixteen). These women have always attracted attention because they are the only mortal females represented in the procession and are placed near the gods. Although some carry vessels, it is difficult to recognize them with certainty by such attributes; instead, it is their clothing that has been the key to their identification. Nothing about the individual garments that make up their costumes is particularly noteworthy: the *chiton*, *peplos*, and mantle are all familiar clothing elements in Classical Greek art. Instead, the signifiers are how these garments are worn and how some of them are worn together. At least sixteen of the young women (III.7, 10, 12–17; VII.50–51, 53–56; and VIII.58–59; damage prevents us from knowing the exact number) are marked by a particular combination of features: a *peplos*, a long mantle pinned over the shoulder, and hair left free to flow down the back. The long hair marks their age – girls, rather than women – and their festival mantle marks them as *kanephoroi*, the girls who were given pride of place in processions while carrying the ritual basket, the *kanoun* (Roccos 1995: 654–9). In addition, it is significant that the garment worn beneath these mantles is the *peplos*, which by this time would have seemed old-fashioned (Harrison 1989: 51–3; Lee 2005). The outfit of these young women is therefore evidence for what scholars of dress call fossilized fashion: some item from an older time is preserved in a costume that is used for special occasions or to mark a special individual. Dressing in such a garment sets a very different tone for the individual than dressing in the clothing of one's occupation or political status. The girl who put on this outfit would have done it when she was *kanephoros*, perhaps only once in her life, and through it she became the embodiment of her task.

Which Message? Propaganda on the Ara Pacis Augustae

The carved friezes of the Ara Pacis are generally similar in form and subject to the Greek procession frieze of the Parthenon. This monumental, open-air complex set in the Campus Martius takes the form of a central altar enclosed by a squarish precinct wall; it is the north and south sides of this wall – the ones uninterrupted by doorways – which were carved with an idealized representation of a contemporary procession. Planned by the Senate to celebrate Augustus, it was finally dedicated on his wife Livia's birthday, 30 January 9 BCE. Aspects of the representation of figures on both the north and south procession make it clear that the who's-who of Roman society are illustrated: senators, priests, family members of Augustus, and even Augustus himself, who is able to be identified by comparison with his portraiture. The precise impetus for the monument and what particular procession the frieze depicts (the celebration of the Senate's decree to construct the altar? the dedication?) have been topics of scholarly discussion (Conlin 1997). It is clear, however, that the friezes do not have a single message, and the main act represented – sacrifice – was an iterative activity; each time the altar was used the processional event was lived anew (Elsner 1991). It could have both a specific and general meaning at the same time, depending on the viewer and context of viewing. With this ritual context in mind, elements of the dress of the participants of the procession can be examined for what message they could send. The choice of an altar and the visual representations of ritual fit general Augustan propaganda of religious rebirth and *pietas* (piety), but the details of that representation are loaded with meaning (Zanker 1988: 118–35). Although the depiction is innovative in its focus on dynasty, it is conservative in other details, such as features of ritual dress, in particular the headdress of the *flamines* and the toga.

Four men who follow Augustus on the south side wear an unusual hat. Tight-fitting around the skull because its cap was made of leather (the *galerus*), it featured a wooden spike on top (the *apex*), and was secured by a woolen fillet below the chin. This unique hat communicates immediately not only that these are Roman priests, but also which particular priests they are: the *flamines*. In addition to the caps, these priests are also depicted with high boots, heavy woolen cloaks, and a ring is visible on the hand of at least two of them. This priestly costume is both distinctive and restrictive: unlike the unbelted tunic or twisted headband which might be worn by any Greek priest, the costume of the Roman *flamines* is worn only by them, and written sources indicate that the *flamen dialis* (who served Jupiter) was strictly required to wear that dress (e.g., Aulus Gellius 15.16–17). When a person was chosen as *flamen*, a ceremony in which he received his garment and began to wear it must have been held; Livy describes the choosing of a *flamen dialis* through reference to him putting on the hat (6.41). This symbol of that investiture marked a priestly presence at an event. Although individuals who take up this office may change over time, the office itself is eternal (Zanker 1988: 121–2). The high visibility of the *flamines* was not the norm, however, and members of most other priesthoods tended to be marked by the dress related to their political role instead (Rüpke 2005).

A more subtle marker of ritual dress is also depicted on the frieze. Several figures in the procession – perhaps most notably those identified as Augustus and Agrippa on the south – are represented with their togas drawn over their heads, *capite velato*. This arrangement of the garment was associated with ritual action, particularly sacrifice, and

thus the image of a covered, togate Roman could be used as a shorthand for the virtue of *pietas*. The Romans sometimes referred to sacrifice done without this dress feature as "a Greek rite," though the covered head was not exclusively Roman, nor was it a strict requirement (Glinister 2009). As exemplified by the young women of the Parthenon frieze, it is not just garments but the organization of those garments that create meaning. *Capite velato* is also proof of action; the physical modification of clothing to prepare for the ritual becomes a part of the ritual.

This salient image has immediate associations for the Roman viewer: (1) even disconnected from the rest of the frieze and the archaeological context, it could be understood as a ritual image; (2) the figures shown this way are marked as sacrificers, which helps set them apart from other figures in the procession, especially the wreathed senators on the north frieze; (3) the action suggests something more Roman than not; and (4) the *pietas* of the figure is communicated. All of these points work toward the creation of a connection between the image and the worshipper who views the image while using the altar.

The wearing of the toga has implications, whether it covers the head or not. Most of the male figures in the procession wear it, including several of the children. The toga was treated as distinctly Roman – they were the *gens togata* (Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.282). It is because of its historical, traditional nature that the toga became a part of the conservative, restorative programs of Augustus; by this time, it had begun to fall out of fashion (Zanker 1988: 162–5; Stone 1994). Increasingly reserved for business, legal, and ceremonial occasions, it is not surprising that the garment appears here on this high-profile monument that depicts a sacrifice including high status people. It is the time for best dress and, for Romans, that requires the toga. The togas of the Ara Pacis would have been even more communicative than can be seen now: the garment was marked by different colors and stripes based on status and situation, and the poor preservation of paint on the monument means that much of the message is missing today (see Chapter 10). That the togate figures on the Ara Pacis should not be viewed simply as another example of fossilized fashion, however, is indicated by how most of the togas are folded. Comparative analysis of togate images over time shows that the garment was not completely static: the figures here (perhaps best viewed through the well-preserved figure of Agrippa) transform the Republican garment by an increase in size, a deep diagonal fold hanging to mid-thigh (the *sinus*), and a loop of cloth pulled up above the *sinus* (the *umbo*) (Stone 1994: 16–23). This folding of the toga should be viewed as a microcosm of Augustan policy itself; advertised as a conservative rebirth and restoration, it was of course so highly constructed as to be innovative. Tradition, nationalism, and piety were wrapped into the wearing of the toga.

Which Actor? Dedications in Terracotta

Public architecture is of course not the only source for religious representation; dedicatory objects, for example, provide archaeological evidence of ritualized gift-giving. When a movable, anthropomorphic figure is uncovered in a sanctuary, it can be identified as an offering, but its symbolism can be difficult to determine: is it a worshipper, a deity, or something else? If it can be resolved that a worshipper is represented, what kind of representation is it? What might the clothing of these figures tell us about the clothed body of a worshipper?

The sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth has produced an array of gifts in terracotta that have been studied with close attention to their context, source of production, and representational features, including dress (Merker 2000, 2003; Bookidis 2010). The figures have been divided into two types: smaller terracotta figurines and larger terracotta statues. Both were used as offerings in the sanctuary covering the chronological span when it was in use, the Archaic through Roman periods. In addition to anthropomorphic figures, the smaller terracottas also take the form of animals and inanimate objects such as food; the larger statues, ranging in size from half- to almost life-sized, are all anthropomorphic.

The dress of the figures is one of the prime determinants for typologies. One of the most problematic questions for dedications – whether a figure is the worshipper or the worshipped – can be partly solved at this site by attention to a particular adornment, the *polos*. This brimless, cylindrical headdress is almost exclusively worn by female deities. When mortal women are depicted wearing them, the *polos* serves to create a visual association between them and the goddess they worship. In the sanctuaries of Demeter and Kore, the terracotta figurines firmly reserve this attribute for the Goddesses (Bell 1981).

In addition, the particular draping of cloth or even the lack of cloth can be used to separate male figures from female, even when only a fragment is preserved, and some garment types allow arguments to be developed about age groups, especially a distinction between unmarried girls and women. Patterns can be found through these typologies that can be used to suggest features of the cult or cultic participation. For example, a major category of the large terracottas at this sanctuary consists of draped males. The method of draping adds new evidence for the history of the development of Corinthian fashion, and the fact that the male figures outnumber the female indicates that something unexpected occurred at this particular sanctuary to the (notably female) Two Goddesses (Bookidis 2010: 267–76).

Even when there is confidence that a human figure represents a worshipper, the mass production of terracottas, especially in the case of the smaller figurines, problematizes the interpretation of symbolic connection between dedicator and dedication. These offerings must be generic enough to speak to multiple needs of multiple people, but also specific enough to be appropriate for dedicatory ritual. The imagery tends to fall into broad types, and comparison to art in other media suggests that style is an important factor in addition to meaning (see Chapter 8 on terracottas of dancers). Furthermore, the ritual of dedication is both personal and public (Merker 2000: 323–4). Although typically enacted at a public space, each ritual actor may have a different personal reason behind the choice of object. For example, many babies are found among the Corinth figures. A baby does not represent the dedicator (unless the figure is presented on that baby's behalf by an adult), but instead signifies something desired by the dedicator. The subtle difference in that desire as expressed by a couple, a mother, a girl about to be married, or even a potential grandparent is significant, and shows that it can be challenging to infer details about the cultic participants based on dedications alone.

In order to test the hypothesis that the clothing of a dedicatory figure imitated the clothing of the dedicator, the dress of the large dedicated figures at Corinth have been examined in light of the information provided by clothing regulations found in the inscribed documents referred to as "sacred laws" (Bookidis 2010: 263–7). None of these regulations come from Corinth, and there is a fair amount of variety among them;

although some general themes can be gleaned, there is no fixed, prescribed dress across cults. As little as they correspond to one another, the rules correspond even less to the figures. For example, when color is preserved, the garments are shades of red and reddish-brown; there is no sign of the "initiate white" mentioned in regulations, nor do any of the luxuries prescribed for certain important festival participants adorn the figures. No pattern can be discerned from the figures to suggest that the outfits conform to any kind of clothing rules, even ones that are not known through other sources.

There is therefore no hint that the terracottas dedicated at the Corinthian sanctuary of Demeter and Kore don the clothing worn by dedicants in anything but the most general way. The ritual participants did not seek a representation that was a mirror image, but rather one that offered a particular idea of themselves. That the clothing characterizes the cult actors at all – their gender, age, mortality – demonstrates that dress was a manner of communicating that message about themselves to the god and others.

Conclusion

The body that performed public ritual activity was primarily a clothed body. Images such as those on the Parthenon and Ara Pacis friezes underline the importance of dressing or modifying dress as a preparatory step for ritual. For each religious event or activity, the individual was met with choices for their garments and adornments: personal, encouraged, prohibited, or prescribed. Identity was made manifest through the sum of those choices, whether one was a young female chosen to carry the *kanoun* or a Corinthian man selecting a terracotta to represent himself in a sanctuary.

Guide to Further Reading

Lee (2012) is an excellent starting point for the history of the study of ancient dress, with focus on Greece. Cleland, Davies, and Llewellyn-Jones (2007) provide short entries on dress terms and topics with brief bibliography. Clinton (1974) compiles evidence for clothing at the Eleusinian Mysteries, while Gawlinski (2008) considers clothing in mysteries more broadly. The dress of Greek religious functionaries is covered by Connelly (2007: 84–115) and Von den Hoff (2008). Etruscan ritual clothing is the focus of Bonfante (2009). Other references to clothing in religious contexts are scattered in collected volumes and monographs on dress, such as Edmondson and Keith (2008). Much of the secondary literature on clothing is tied to ancient women and gender and can be sought in those publications.

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CHAPTER 8

Dance

Frederick Naerebout

Demarcating the Subject

All religious ritualized behavior is an instance of embodiment. Such behavior is performed by humans, they *do* ritual with their bodies. Indeed, the corporeality of ritual is an important part of its efficacy. Those bodies have a certain appearance (including dress, see Chapter 7), take up a position in space relative to their surroundings and to other bodies, and are in movement – gesturing, posturing, traveling through space (see Chapter 3): the most important components of what is called nonverbal behavior. Religious ritual will include the nonverbal. Here we focus on the kinetic aspect, but we cannot see movement apart from the other aspects of nonverbal behavior. Also, the kinetic phenomena will usually be accompanied by acoustic ones – strictly speaking, always, because keeping silent, the purposeful avoidance of sound, is an acoustic phenomenon as well. Acoustic phenomena can be part of the nonverbal, but they can also be verbal.

Usually, the bodily movements in question are not specific to the ritual context – they are movements that could be encountered in many different contexts, and either have no meaning beyond the mundane, or have meaning attributed to them according to the context wherein they are performed. Only a relatively small number of movements will be specific to their ritual context: some gestures, poses, and locomotion that are sufficiently distinct to be recognized as being unique to a particular (type of) occasion.

The subject here is all bodily movements performed within a religious context (our modern distinction of secular versus religious does not apply in the ancient world, but nevertheless we may distinguish spaces and time spans set aside for the express purpose of communicating with the supernatural), whether specific to that context or not, that involve the whole body (smaller-scale movements, such as gestures, can be comprised within such movements), and during which the body travels. Also, it should be stylized

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movement, a heightened form of expression, that we would place somewhere on the scale from striding to dancing. Some movement types that we might categorize as acrobatics, such as tumbling, are included as well. All such movements are rhythmized, and usually go together with equally stylized forms of utterance such as reciting and singing, and can be accompanied by anything from basic percussion (stamping of feet, clapping of hands, slapping of the body) to the use of musical instruments.

For the purpose of this chapter, we will speak of "dance" and "music", both broadly defined, the first as "human movement … intentional, rhythmized and patterned … (and of a) communicative nature" (Naerebout 1997: 165–6), and the second as "humanly organized sound … organized with intent … as a communication" (after Blacking 1971: 92; 1973: 3; Godt 2005: 84). The above are all etic definitions (scholarly constructs); emically (in the conceptual framework of a particular society), the lines between music and non-music, or dance and non-dance, can be drawn very differently. The etic definitions above are, however, closely allied to current emic usage in American and European culture, and the emic usages of the ancient Mediterranean seem to have distinguished more or less the same semantic fields – indeed, we are likely to have inherited those (Naerebout 1997: 177, 187).

While the ancient world knew of music without dance, there are actually no examples known of dance without music: there is always song or other musical accompaniment. In an archaeological (and ethnographical) context it is best to look upon music and dance not as entities but as human activities, what has been called "musicking": "to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (Small 1998: 9). The association of dance with music, here expressed by the word "musicking", is strong enough for there to be in the ancient Greek world a concept *mousike* which includes both the acoustic and kinetic components.

The Sources

Dance and music in and out of the immediate religious sphere are very well-documented as regards the number of sources, textual and otherwise, but these are one-sided and altogether difficult to interpret. This need not surprise, as we are speaking here of two ephemeral activities only realized in performance. Music could be notated, but probably only rarely was – and it is even rarer in our sources. Dance seems to have gone without any technical recording (whether in notation, precise description or imagery) at all. Attempts to find a detailed analysis of individual movements and even of complete choreographies in either ancient texts or images must be considered wishful thinking (especially the century-long French tradition stretching from M. Emmanuel by way of G. Prudhommeau to M.-H. Delavaux-Roux), as must any other attempts to revive or reconstruct ancient dance movement. Thus the actual movement and sound are almost completely lost to us.

The fact that we do not have a single sequence of dance movements has serious consequences for the way we judge our texts and images. Memories of dances seen or performed might very well form the basis for description or for image-making (in a certain sense they always will: someone "inventing" a dance will also draw on past experiences), but we have

no way to look in on the process (cf. Chapter 11). As we have no examples of actual dances, we cannot say to what extent descriptions and images are documenting existing dances and, if they do, whether they do so in a more or less reliable way, i.e., documenting observable reality in a manner we can relate to. Sometimes there is reason to think they do, but very often we have no clue. Especially, the imagery is quite intractable. What are in fact different dances may look alike, different performances of the same dance may look dissimilar. There may be partial invention to fill in gaps in the memory, or to embellish a reality considered not exciting enough. Artistic conventions and the preferences of the market will commonly be more important than any striving for verisimilitude. And certainly we cannot expect dance to remain unchanged over any period of time. Although the supposed timelessness of the nonverbal is almost topical, there is no such thing, even though it is often claimed to be so by the performers themselves, especially in a ritual context. Ethnographic research shows that dance is as prone to change as any other phenomenon in human society – which implies that the common practice of combining evidence from sources ranging from the Bronze Age to Byzantium in a single picture of the dance, or of individual dances, in ancient society cannot be other than misleading.

We will come back to the imagery, but first we must direct our attention to two other, quite heterogeneous categories of archaeological evidence that potentially are quite informative about movement as realized in practice, because these are not sources on the meta-level of discourse on movement, whether in the form of text or image, but artifacts that are the archaeological correlates of actual performance: first, performance space; and secondly, accoutrements of dancers (and as an indirect source: of musicians).

Performance Spaces

Written sources inform us that music and dance were an important part of many cults. We may hazard the hypothesis that in the myriad cases for which "musicking" is not attested, it nevertheless quite likely was part of the ritual. Still, it is but rarely that in our archaeological record we can point at specific spaces meant for the performance of music and dance. Commonly, dance was not confined to dedicated dance floors, but was performed in some space that was also used for other activities. Thus we hear of dancing along processional streets and of dancing around altars in *temene*. Consequently, we can look at sanctuaries and at their immediate surroundings, and make a case that any open-air areas that are relatively level and free of obstacles may have functioned as dance floors. To approach this from another direction, and conclude from a particular architectural feature that this will have facilitated dance, is an uncommon and difficult thing. Where a well in Eleusis (in another, earlier architectural setting than the one in our present archaeological record) is likely to have been the focal point of round dances, this is because of its name Kallichoron or Kallichoros and a reference in Pausanias to dances that were once performed there (Richardson 1974: 326–7). The only indisputable, rather obvious, example would be the orchestra in ancient theaters, and one could relate its round shape to the threshing floors that in small communities doubled as dance floors – but again, without knowledge of the dances of ancient drama and without the very word "orchestra" we might not be that certain what these spaces were meant for. The mention of orchestras here implies that I consider ancient drama (and its dances) to

be a religious occasion (and not a non-religious occasion in a religious setting; cf. MacMullen 1981; Naerebout 1997). It is the occasion that determines whether we consider any activity as part of religious life.

The one other case where dance might be inferred is in the case of dining rooms. Such *deipnisteria* or *hestiatoria* at sanctuaries are small: in the centre of a standard room there remain at most twenty square meters, taking *klinai* and tables into account (Börker 1983). This extremely constricted space leaves room for a single dancer, say a professional dancing girl to enliven your *estiasis* or *demothoinia*, your private or public feasting. Whether any such entertainment can be considered to be of a ritual nature because it takes place within a sanctuary depends on what one considers to be the nature of activities within a *temenos* perimeter. As with ancient drama just mentioned, I would have the context decide: there is no such thing as a religious or a ritual dance, there is dance in a primarily religious setting, but that dance might also have been performed in other settings. I say "might" because some dances may have been specific for their religious context.

The orchestra is part of a theater. So another way of tracing dance in the archaeological record is to look for audience amenities. Apart from the obvious theatrical buildings, we find slopes or embankments around possible performance areas in sanctuaries that look like having been in use for seating. Also, the stepped wall at the Argive Heraion, and steps along the sides of Arcadian temples and of Syrian temples at a much later date have been claimed as seats. That steps functioned as seating need not be doubted when they are enclosed in a building with a known religious purpose, such as the *telesteria* in Eleusis and on Samothrake (Tomlinson 1976: 92; on steps used for this purpose, see also MacMullen 1981: 21, and many references to *Schautreppen* in Kuhn 1985: 281). The Doric Greek towns of Crete have stepped structures dating from the archaic period to Hellenistic days, which are often clearly connected with a temple or altar, and are probably stands or seats (Thomas 1984). In all such instances, one could think of dance performances as one of the spectacles looked at from such grandstands. The palace courts of Minoan Crete may have fulfilled the same function, though it is not always clear whether the audience was on the grandstands looking at a performance in the court, or the public was in the court looking at individuals positioned on the grandstands. Also open columned halls, stoas, such as the stoa of the Athenians along Delphi's *hiera hodos*, have, very convincingly, been claimed as stands for spectators watching processions, and stoas at other places, such as Delos, Didyma and Milete, as spectator amenities from which to watch sacrificial ritual (Kuhn 1985). All of these may have involved dances.

Accoutrements

Next, the accoutrements of dancers: an obvious category, but again fraught with difficulty. We know from imagery and description that some dancers carried objects, such as weapons and armor, or vessels. All such objects had their use outside the dance and are not to be traced in the archaeological record as accoutrements for the dance. We do not know about special props produced exclusively for dancers, with the exception of dress, headgear and masks. Dress and headgear specific to the dance have not survived in the archaeological record – we are entirely dependent upon representations for our knowledge. Representations

can be helpful in this respect; the point here, however, is not whether we can know what an item of dress looked like, but whether there is anything in the archaeological record to indicate the presence of dance.

Masks are a disputed category. We have many two- and three-dimensional representations of masks, but the masks themselves appear (almost?) always to have been made of some perishable material. Masks, as a means of representation and personality enhancement (or effacement), are of course of great importance in the history of drama and dance in general. As far as Greek dances are concerned our information is sparse, if we leave aside the much-discussed theatrical masks which are of course a ubiquitous category – though one for which we have no concrete examples either. When we concentrate on masks that may have been worn in dances performed in a sanctuary context other than the theatre, there is not much to go by. The best-known examples of masks that may have been intended for that kind of performance are the masks found at the temple of Artemis Orthia in Sparta (Dickins 1929). These seem to be votive copies of the actual (wooden?) masks used in the ritual, though I think that at least some of the masks as found might have been worn. Even if they are all votive copies, they do show holes for fastening and other redundant features which prove that real masks were quite like them as well. The occasion at which these or comparable masks were used cannot be inferred from the masks themselves. And although it has been generally accepted that these masks were dancers' accoutrements, in fact we cannot be certain that they were connected with the dance at all; the texts advanced and the objects do not actually correspond to a significant degree. The masks come in several different types, six or four depending on the typology used. One of these types is an "old woman"-type, but this is the only one that can be connected to the written evidence. This leaves the connection between the Orthia masks and whatever dance very much in doubt. In the archaeological record we can find some other masks that might have been worn by dancers. The late examples discovered at the Kabirion near Thebes might be considered serious candidates because of the strong dance component in the local cult (Rouse 1902: 250), but there is no hard evidence.

In addition to dress, headgear and masks, there might be one other exception: the ceramic vessels that were carried on the head in Eleusinian ritual, apparently also in the dance, as portrayed on the famous Ninnion tablet (Simon 1966). Several *kernoi* have been found in an appropriate sanctuary context (Eleusis, Athens; see Pollitt 1979), but it is disputed whether these are indeed the vessels intended by our vase painters.

Musical instruments are of course also accoutrements that may indicate the presence of dance. Such instruments could be held and played either by the dancers themselves, or by musicians who accompanied the dancers. But not every instrument will do: music could be performed on its own, or as accompaniment to other activities. *Auloi*, the hoboe-like instruments remains of which are relatively frequent in the archaeological record, can be played as solo or orchestral instruments, autonomously or in accompaniment to anything from sacrifice to athletics. Nevertheless, some instruments are so closely associated with the dance, especially percussion instruments such as *krotalai*, cymbals, and frame drums of different kinds, that their presence in the archaeological record can be seen as almost necessarily indicating the presence of dance. But finds are relatively few, and a set of cymbals in a grave can at the most characterize the deceased as an aficionado of the dance, or a dancer. But that does not tell us anything we did not

already know: that there is dance and music in every ancient community, and that thus we will encounter dancers and musicians, both amateurs and professionals.

Representations

Representations of dance are extremely plentiful, and this very wide field of dance imagery is our single most important source next to the large amount of literary testimonials. We must not forget that much poetry is an artifact of the dance itself – being part of *mousike* – which is borne out by the frequent self-referential remarks by the performers: "we dance and sing". To these we should add epigraphy, a rather disregarded category of evidence as far as dance is concerned, which offers the most reliable confirmation of the presence of dance at a particular time and place. But it hardly contributes much specific information beyond that basic fact, unless it can be combined with the archaeological evidence. Epigraphy would also offer the best, and often the only, way of knowing the name of a particular dance. Many dances, however, may not have had a name (as we will see below, putting a name to some representation of the dance has been an important task that classical studies set itself in vain). Or it may have seemed sufficient at the time to speak merely of "dance" and "dancers".

The first question to ask is, of course: when does an image show dance? We are dealing with static images of a kinetic art and these can be difficult to recognize as such. If, however, we agree on the supposition that the producers of these images attempted to disambiguate the imagery, we can draw up a list of specific pictorial patterns that signaled to the ancient observer that a dance scene was intended. Raised legs, jumps without jumping weights, bent knees with both legs held together, tiptoeing, protruding buttocks, distorted torso, head thrown backwards, swirling garments, shading the eyes with one hand, holding up one's dress with one or both hands, muffling the hands in one's garments – if one finds these, preferably in some combination, and possibly also combined with musical instruments, masks, or remarkable dress and headgear – one can be fairly certain that dance is supposed to be depicted (cf. Naerebout 1997: 217–24). Next, if we agree it is, what then can we learn from it? There are several distortive factors at work: pictorial conventions and formulas, and restrictions imposed by the medium. With two-dimensional images, the representation of space and of the relationship between objects within space is problematic as long as there is no general adoption of converging central point perspective. Related is the problem of a floor line, which may be positioned arbitrarily or not at all. As to the medium, much dance imagery can be found on painted pots: freestanding objects decorated on convex or concave surfaces, with the imagery either running round the object, occupying a single side, or a particular field, such as the tondo inside a cup. We must conclude that with such restrictions the imagery is not always going to help us in deciding what a dance may actually have looked like. Reliefs and certainly freestanding three-dimensional artwork might be more helpful. Here we have to ask ourselves whether the imagery, or any part of it, was ever intended to represent dance with any verisimilitude.

First of all, we have to deal with "idealization", i.e., producing imagery of musicking that does not represent anything that could at the time and place of the production of the imagery be encountered in lived reality. Either the whole or some component of a

representation may be imaginary (for instance, archaizing, or fantastic). Where at one time representations tended to be seen as realist images and used accordingly as evidence for actual practice, now the idea has generally been accepted that a large part of the imagery is not of a realist but of an idealist nature. This makes it very difficult to base any conclusions regarding actual musicking on representations. Related are the issues of symbol and metaphor; the moot question is whether depiction as a symbol or metaphor precludes something from being part of actual practice. The answer is no. But nevertheless, purely symbolic or metaphoric use remains a possibility. Secondly, imagery in the ancient world seems to be quite stereotyped. The same images are repeated or variegated upon for extremely long periods of time. It is exactly this that makes one doubt how far Etruscan and Roman images can be used as independent evidence – because Greek visual *topoi* seem to be re-worked there for centuries. This can sometimes imply that a certain bit of imagery has become merely ornamental. Usually, it will still be functional, but obviously imagery need not relate to observable reality for it to be functional – for instance, because a mythical world that the images refer to has not lost its relevance.

If we add everything together, it follows that we cannot use the countless representations of the dance to reconstruct any specific dances, and that we cannot even put them to use to show what dance belongs in which religious context. They do show us that dance was an important part of ritual. I would consider it perverse to suggest that the ubiquitous dance imagery need not be paralleled by any dance in the real world, although in the absence of literary or epigraphic sources, this cannot be disproven. In a comparable manner, I have not distinguished between human and non-human dancers: where non-human dancers (divinities and their retinue) are depicted as dancing, I would consider this reflective of human dance in honor of these divinities. So the images at least present us with an *idea* of what dance was appropriate for which context.

The above can also be expressed in the following manner: most of our images are generic (as is most of our textual evidence), generic in the sense that they represent a few broad categories, usually ours and not theirs (for a good example of an honest struggle with a large set of unruly iconographic evidence brought together in a modern category, see Smith 2010). For a long time, in archaeological literature, a lot of effort was made to connect some specific type of imagery with a named dance (we have many names of dances, especially from late lexicographic sources – for one such attempt, see Brommer 1989). Most connections that have been established are in fact quite arbitrary: the images are not labeled, and of the named dances there are no proper descriptions. A few link-ups, however, seem self-evident: we have images of armed dancers, and we have a couple of names of armed dances. But even there, it seems impossible to say whether any image in particular shows a pyrrhic, a *prulis* or some other named armed dance (for the evidence, see Ceccarelli 1998).

There is just the odd instance of the image that *did* get labeled: The odd satyr or komast with a *sprechende Name*, a speaking name, which shows them to be dancers, but no more. The dance leader on a Corinthian *aryballos* (Boegehold 1965) is indicated as such, which also does not help any further. Then we have a relief from Athens with what might be dithyrambic dancers and certainly with *pyrrhichistai*, the last ones disambiguated by an inscription (Wilson 2000: 39): a unique instance and not easily related to other

imagery. Next, there is a vase with dancers wearing very striking *kalathiskoi*. In the same scene an inscribed stele is depicted that allows us to identify it as the festival of the Karneia at Taras (Moret 1979), another unique case and again not leading on to other images of the same kind.

Amongst the non-labeled images, it is of course also the non-generic ones that should draw our attention. It is there that we could expect to find, as with the Athenian relief and the Taras vase just mentioned, examples of images that do relate to observable reality, i.e., that show a dance, however realistically or unrealistically depicted, that was performed in real life when these were being made (I refrain from complicating matters by pointing to the possible discrepancy between the intentions of the producers and the reception by some audience, but we should keep that in mind). Best examples of such non-generic imagery are representations with a known provenance and (largely) restricted to that particular site without ever having entered into the common fund of imagery. Here we can think of the dances, races and chases on pottery from the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia (Kahil 1983, with references to her earlier publications), or the statuettes from Kharayeb of a dancing child dressed in a short himation, legs showing (Chéhab 1951–4: pl. 36–8). Some of these lift their left arm high so that the himation is pulled up just enough to show the male sex. From Priene we have a series of statuettes of young girls holding up their skirt (Raeder 1984: no. 95–7), not paralleled elsewhere. I would like to add the well-known Ariccia relief (from Ariccia near Rome: MacMullen 1981: 22) to the foregoing examples, but the general opinion is that it shows a scene taking place in Egypt because of the ibises in the foreground; I suggest the ibises indicate that this is an Egyptian cult scene, but one taking place on Italian soil, including the frenetic dancing. Altogether, there are relatively few non-generic images that we can consider as illustrative of a specific cult at a specific moment in time. And even there, some of the other limitations of the visual evidence still apply.

An Example: Mantle Dancers

An example might illustrate how we can tackle the large bulk of generic imagery. I take as an example the so-called "mantle dancers": a modern designation (the following after Naerebout 2002). These are images, rare in the vase painting and relief sculpture of the classical period and very common amongst the terracotta statuary of the Hellenistic period, of women who dance fully cloaked, often with one or both hands within their garments and sometimes with a veiled face. For a start, we should stop worrying about what dance the "mantle dancer" is performing: whether it existed and, if so, what it was called, where it came from and what its nature and steps were. We must stand back for a moment and look on the mantle dancer as one of a series which is embedded amongst other more or less contemporaneous series. Once we have established in what contexts dance was performed *or dance was imagined* in the period during which those series were produced and procured, we can try to find some niche for our mantle dancers.

Hellenistic terracottas of mantle dancers are found all over the Greek world: they form an extensive series. Other series in Hellenistic terracotta statuary are, first, "entertainers".

This is my label for images of girls with rather less dress on than the mantle dancers. That does not imply that they can only have performed within some profane context; but they certainly do look like professionals. We can include here the so-called "dancing dolls", better named jointed or articulated figurines, which seem to portray a comparable kind of dancer. All of these are characterized by full nudity, or by a short skirt and bare breasts; most hold *krotala*. Possibly the famous Priene terracotta of a short-skirted dancer (Raeder 1984: no. 2) should go here, but it is something of a unique piece. Secondly, we come to dwarfs and grotesques. Dwarf entertainers and dancing grotesques are first and foremost (though not exclusively so) Egyptian (see Dasen 1993). The outstanding examples of dancing dwarfs are the Mahdia bronzes, probably Alexandrian work, now in the Bardo Museum, Tunis (Wrede 1988). They have pendants amongst the terracottas. Thirdly, there is the Dionysiac *thiasos*, whose members we cannot and need not discuss in any detail. Very common in Magna Grecia are terracottas of a dancer dressed in a sleeveless *chiton* who is holding out her arms in front. The swaying skirts, the occasional bare breast, and the general similarity to the unquestioned maenads make me put these, at

Figure 8.1 So-called mantle dancer, a terracotta statuette said to come from Smyrna; middle 4th c. BCE. Her face-veil is clearly visible. Type: Winter II p.145, 3. Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (National Museum of Antiquities) inv: SvL 144 (D291).

least provisionally, with the *thiasos*. Also as part of the thiasos I categorize the *tympanistriai*: women playing the *tympanon*. Fourthly, we have *kalathiskos* dancers: short-skirted dancers wearing a basket-like headdress (Brommer 1989: 485–6). And fifthly, "oriental dancers": these are in dressed in Phrygian costume and perform a crouching dance with both hands clasped above the head (the so-called *oklasma*: Brommer 1989: 488–9).

As Pollitt has argued, all sorts of imagery have been produced between the third century BCE and the Roman period that we find difficult to classify, date, and interpret. The large number of figurines of satyrs, nymphs, female figures, children, animals, dwarfs, grotesques, actors, and figures from daily life remains as yet fairly mysterious. Putting it all together may assist in coming up with some answers. The comparison between the six series of dance imagery (including the mantle dancers) and the overall picture that arises from the written evidence, could embolden one to hazard a hypothesis. Mantle dancers appear to be the only series of dance imagery which shows ordinary women in ordinary dress worn in an ordinary way and not disambiguated by any paraphernalia. There are no indications that they belong in the theatre, nor in the sphere of Dionysiac myth or on some other supernatural plane, nor amongst the retinue of the Hellenistic ruler or amongst other professional entertainers. That the mantle dancers are in a different sphere of their own is underlined by the fact that representatives of the other categories, such as dwarfs, and actors or satyrs,

Figure 8.2 So-called mantle dancer, a terracotta statuette in a private collection, provenance unknown, probably Boeotian, 4th c. BCE. The type is Winter II p.146, 8.

sometimes mimic or caricature them. So what niche is left for the mantle dancers? The one that is filled by the majority of the inscriptions which deal with non-theatrical choruses which had always been and will remain for a long time to come an essential ingredient of the public events which structured civic life. Seen in this light, the mantle dancers are ordinary upper-class women, dressed as ordinary upper-class women commonly were, performing at one of these many events of a public nature, such as a festival at a sanctuary. Occurring over much of the Greek world these dancers signify nothing in particular, just as a dancing satyr is not some particular satyr. The mantle dancers do not perform a particular choreography, and are not meant to portray a particular group of dancers participating in a particular event. They call to mind the common chorus, *any* such chorus: they evoke the connotation "dance by female community members in a public context."

Conclusions

It seems that, with the exception of organology, we can learn preciously little about dance and music from archaeological sources, that is, when we expect those sources to contribute any of the detail which the texts do not offer. The information that could help us to enliven an ancient dance performance, with its acoustic counterpart, and thus to fully grasp the importance of a specific kinetic language in a specific cultic context, simply is not there. The embodiment itself is no longer there and cannot be reconstructed. That is a pity, because what Marcel Mauss has called the "bodily techniques" are culture-specific: every culture has its own embodiment of the social world, its own ways to use the body to establish and maintain the borders of in-group versus out-group, of gender, or class, and so on (Crossley 2004). Literary sources sometimes offer us a glimpse of the fact that embodiment in the ancient world will have been quite specific according to time and place, as when dancers of the *pyrriche* in classical Athens are said to perform it in an unmanly manner unlike earlier generations, or when Plato wants to distinguish between seemly and unseemly dances, and when in Rome such distinctions are put into practice in order to socially condemn those who dance "the wrong dances", move in an un-Roman manner (Naerebout 2009).

As we have seen, amenities, accoutrements and representations mainly confirm what we already knew: dance was an important part of religious life. At most, the archaeology together with the epigraphy can deliver proof that dances were indeed being performed at site X during time frame Y–Z. Such evidence again underlines that we will do well to keep in mind that almost no ritual occasion in the ancient world will have been complete without the movement and the music. But we should be satisfied that in almost all instances we can only speak about this in general terms. These are important enough: the kinetic and acoustic aspects are often overlooked or discussed in isolation – thus obscuring the fact that what makes ritual "tick" is in large part its corporeality. Speaking about "lived religion" we should never forget about the body and its "bodily techniques".

The rarity of imagery specific to some locale points to most of the imagery being generic. Such generic imagery and most of our textual evidence inform us about "dance": they give an impression of the occasions at which *mousike* was deemed appropriate, and more generally the different ways in which it was appreciated. We can distinguish some broad categories, and hypothesize about the niches these will have filled, but we do not

learn anything about a specific dance as part of a specific cult – unless such generalities as a dance being martial, ecstatic or acrobatic, circular or linear, all-male or for both sexes, and so on and so forth. Leaving aside the fact that even such apparently simple characterizations are fraught with difficulties, we can spill endless amounts of ink on whether the ritual life of a sanctuary, a festival, a divinity calls for ecstatic or whatever kind of dancing or not. And we will come up with a hypothesis why it does, because we could hardly deny the evidence for its existence. But again: we have no way to go beyond the generalities.

We can say quite a lot about the position of dance (singular) in society, and its functions within a ritual context, but we will not be able to speak about dances (plural), let alone the actual realizations of such dances in performance. If we are strict, we should even say that there are no dances to know, there are only the individual performances – which are completely beyond our grasp (unless an image would commemorate a specific performance and a specific performer: not likely except in very rare instances and always beyond proof). The few instances of non-generic, specific imagery (and a number of inscriptions) and material relics such as dance floors bring us somewhat closer to the actual movement of a specific time and place. But even here there is so much more that remains undocumented, such as, here too, the actual performances. Still, we could say that the main contribution of such non-generic images and texts is the introduction of some time depth into what otherwise tends towards the synchronic, with ancient dance and music seen as a kind of timeless phenomenon, which they definitely were not.

Guide to Further Reading

Naerebout (1997) studies ancient Greek dance in depth. Naerebout (2006) and Naerebout (2009) discuss further details regarding the explicitness or implicitness of dance. A good overview of the material of dance is given by Shapiro (2004).

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CHAPTER 9

Gendered Agents and Embodied Religious Experience

Zsuzsanna Várhelyi

How are we to read "gender" in the religious experience of Greco-Roman societies where that etic category does not exist and where roles and boundaries do not map readily on to a primary conceptual binary of male vs. female? What part did religious experience play in inscribing and challenging gendered social roles in the ancient world (Wilcox 2006)? These two fundamental questions are at the heart of this synopsis of the archaeology of religion related to gender in the ancient world. Spanning over a thousand years of historical changes and offering a myriad of local variations, antiquity's contributions to these issues cannot be reduced to any singular or even simple narrative. In the following, I focus primarily on periods where rich archaeological and textual evidence co-exists, such as Classical Greece and late Republican/early imperial Rome – a situation where the interpretation of literary evidence has pre-shaped our perspective to a significant degree and where the task of connecting textual and material remains is often the most challenging.

This chapter is organized into three sections that largely follow three trends in the evolution of studying women and gender in the ancient world. The three perspectives chiefly correlate with the three "waves" of feminism that emerged in a chronological sequence, which the structure of my chapter also follows. Simply put, the first of these waves occurred with the arrival of the first feminist questions in the study of the ancient world in the 1970s, investigating the limited presence of women in our literary and material record. Building on these, second-wave studies, from the late 1980s on, aimed at locating women's roles within the larger social context shared by men and women. It was in response to the binary inclination of these studies and impelled by emerging third-wave feminist and queer theories that, from the late 1990s, some scholars began to challenge the project of reading the "signs" of gender in ancient evidence. Their third-wave studies urged that we focus on the ongoing experience and performance of gender, along with many other variables such as social status and age in a way that recognizes the embodied nature of all social life – including religion.

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It is important to emphasize at the outset that I do not intend to imply either that there is no important research carried out any more in the vein of the first two approaches, or that the third is the final, teleological high-point of archaeological research on gender from now on. Rather, the organization of this chapter reflects my sense that the problems investigated, and even the basic notions of society they presume, can differ markedly among scholars embracing any one of the three trends and, further, that the progressive emergence of these perspectives offers the clearest explanation of what is at stake for each (for a similar approach with more detail on the emergence of these trends in archaeology see Spencer-Wood 2007). Unavoidably, my discussion of these developments is not comprehensive but I intend to offer a selection that is representative of the kinds of treatments offered in the past four decades.

Finding Women and Their Religious Activities

The subject of gender emerged as an innovative focal point of studies in ancient religion in the 1970s, predominantly as a feminist question about women's participation in this as well as in many other aspects of social life (e.g., Pomeroy 1975). Given the limits of textual evidence for women's lives even in general, turning to the rich material evidence depicting religious activity on Greek vase paintings was an obvious choice. In an important early analysis along these lines, Eva Keuls argued (1984) that such imagery can offer otherwise unavailable data with regard to how various gender roles were actually enacted and shaped, for example in the imagery of Dionysiac cult on fifth-century Athenian vase paintings. A number of studies that followed were based on the same assumption that painted imagery is a precious and unique resource attesting ritual action, and thus proves the presence of women in Athenian religious life, especially partaking in funerary rituals as mourners and performing ritual roles in public cult festivals, including the Panathenaia.

The scholarly practice of taking vase paintings as a precise depiction of religious ritual grew more suspect in the following decade. As Marilyn Goldberg put it most succinctly, "these vases cannot be understood as photographs" (1999: 151) if we wish to learn about actual practices. But to what use can we put visual imagery depicting what seem clearly religious actions if we cannot take visual depictions as proof of their own factuality? In recent years, varied responses have been given to this question, and the one that most engages the original scholarly question of women's participation is Connelly's recent grand monograph on Greek priestesses (2007). On her view, while iconographic conventions can potentially skew our sense of what such patterns really stand for, not relying on such data would miss important evidence for women's participation and even the cultural fabric in which their religious activities took place. Connelly's strategy is to establish "broad structures of organization" against which she can then read "the micrology of lived relations within this system" (Connelly 2007: 22). It is very hard, for example, to tell priestesses apart from other women with some certainty in material evidence in the Classical-Hellenistic period; the only exceptions being the *kanephoroi* (basket-bearers) and the *kleidouchoi* (women depicted holding temple keys). Not all scholars would follow Connelly, who recognizes priestesses much more widely in the iconographic evidence, in particular women depicted while performing a libation. Her evidence for women's

presence (whether they were priestesses or not) in religious rituals is nevertheless significant in itself and suggests more than simply an iconographic shorthand.

Connelly emphasized that religious events offered opportunities for women that were unequivocally *different* from the usual division of gender roles in ancient Greek city-states. More explicitly, in arguing for women's participation in bloody sacrifice, including the consumption of meat in ancient Greece, Robin Osborne suggested that the presence and visibility of women and their priestly activities distinguished the religious sphere from the political; it was only in the latter that participation was restricted to males alone (Osborne 1993). Similar arguments have been put forward with regard to the Roman material. Celia Schultz analyzed both literary and material evidence to argue for women's religious roles in the Republic (Schultz 2006) and Mary Boatwright explicitly claimed that religious events were an exception to the usual absence of women from the Forum Romanum in this period (Boatwright 2011). If religious time and space were indeed privileged with their own gender rules, then it is even more critical for us to investigate how both men and women were gendered in these settings. Within the religious cultures of both Athens and Rome, there were some public festivities restricted exclusively to women: e.g., Thesmophoria, among many others, in Athens or, in Rome, the rather unique celebrations of Bona Dia. These festivals included numerous pre-arrangements, the election of officials and the like that could bond women qua women almost as much as the shared religious experience afterwards probably did. But were women essentially like men at these all-women festivals? And when men and women participated in the same festival together, did they have a sense of *shared*, and maybe generally masculine, religious experience?

The exploration of these subjects offers much fertile ground for future studies that will hopefully shed light on the myriad historical and local variations in women's religious lives. An area of special promise in this regard is mimesis in ancient religion. What sense are we to make of the ritual practice of having a woman dress up as Athena for a ritual? Eva Stehle suggestively analyzed the Athenian Thesmophoria in this regard as an adoption of Demeter's state of mourning, a bodily performance which contributed to the reverberation of emotions within the women's community (2007). How would such a ritual be different from the portrayal of a woman in the Roman empire who is depicted offering a sacrifice, with a sacrificial *patera* in her right hand, on the example, or at least in parallel to the widespread representations of (the Juno of) Livia, wife of the emperor Augustus doing just the same? How do images of powerful women (on whatever level of divinity) depicted in religious contexts shape the religious experience of other women in the same historical period? The archaeological material inevitably has a primary role in shaping scholarly responses to these questions.

Gendered Activities

To study the traces of women's religious activity based on individual monuments or artifacts was one of the first areas where analysis of gender roles gained ground in Classical archaeology and art history. Having grown out of first-wave feminist theory, these studies often focused on showing that women could have active religious roles in Greco-Roman societies, even though they were less frequently and most often only

stereotypically represented in the literary evidence of their own eras. A more comprehensive approach to ancient social and religious life was made possible by the emergence of what is commonly referred to as second-wave feminist theory, which tried to situate the evidence for women's spaces and activities within a larger, if binary, framework of spaces and practices shared across genders.

An excellent example of the great potential of this approach is a study by Josine Blok based on a database of over a thousand vases and fragments from Attica dating from 550–400 BCE. Blok was able to establish large-scale gendered tendencies in the depictions of particular rituals: the custom was to gender animal sacrifice as practiced predominantly by males and libations as practiced primarily by females (2009). Further, sacrificial depictions on these vases separated men's and women's ritual participation along gendered lines: sacrifices were "perceived as performed either by men or by women and less frequently by women and men together" (Blok 2009: 95). It is against such a large database that Blok could also point out local trends. There is a difference, for example, in vase depictions of ritual activity between Attica and Italy: in the former, men and women can be depicted together in a religious context more frequently, but only in the special case of ritual processions. Even though it may be hard to tell the exact difference in religious actions practiced in Attica or in Italy, the evidence suggests the interaction between some varieties in depictions and local perceptions. The fact that Athenian imagery was significantly more likely to depict mixed gender groups in a ritual context is especially instructive. It suggests that Athenian buyers of vases were at least comfortable with the idea of such a mix of men and women as part of religious life – a notion that is probably just as relevant for our understanding of lived religious experience as the question to what extent women actually participated in various rituals.

In a re-reading of fifth-century "Lenaia vases", which include a Dionysiac cult image and dancing maenads, Sarah Peirce argued that these images neither corresponded directly with historical enactments of Dionysiac rituals nor functioned as a visual record or summary of such enactments (Peirce 1998). Her analysis showed that the depictions of the *bacchai* in procession on these vases was not borrowed from the iconography of sacred procession (*thiasos*) but from that of the *symposion* displaying a group of drinkers in a post-party revel (*komos*) on their reverse. The obverse of the vases emphasizes this iconographic connection with the *symposion*, as the women are shown drinking, yet their modest dress and the emphasis on the scene of ladling the wine complicate the idea that the women should be identified as those participating in *symposia* in Athens, namely the *hetairai*. Further, the representation of the cult image of Dionysus on a side table suggests hospitality to the god, turning a possible scene of revelry into an instance of inviting a god to participate in the celebratory *symposion* in his honor. In other words, these depictions both exploited and violated the pre-existing iconographic conventions; they did so, on Peirce's sophisticated reading, in order to communicate a message that endowed Bacchic women with the status of men and thereby licensed their religious participation in an all-female ritual. There are a number of advantages in such a reading of the material: first, the contextualization of these paintings of women as part of a wider usage of vase depictions in ancient Athens; secondly, the recognition that vase painting was part of a larger social life with its own valorizations of men and women; and, finally, the perspective that these depictions themselves offered dynamic elaborations on those valorizations, such as the gendering of the maenads as male for the purpose of the ritual.

Another good example of the evolution of the debate concerning women's presence in sacred contexts is offered by the textile production tools found in votive deposits within sanctuaries. These implements, such as loom weights and also some spindle whorls and spools, could be inscribed with the name of the divinity or stamped with a divinity's special attributes – marks that can, in some cases, be identified as made before firing the clay and thereby suggesting the dedicatory purpose of the item (Lipkin 2012). Traditionally, and not unreasonably, such textile implements were seen as evidence of cult activities in association with mostly (although not always) female deities, such as Athena/Minerva, Hera/Juno, and Artemis/Diana, who protected women, their domestic activities and their sharing in marriage in general. In recent years, intensive debate developed concerning the purpose and nature of these finds, raising in particular the matter of ritual textile production inside sanctuaries. This practice is well known from literary evidence, such as the annual weaving of a new *peplos* for Athena Polias in Athens, including a period of nine months during which young girls selected as *Arrhephoroi* to weave lived on the Akropolis (and possibly weaved inside the Temple of Athena Polias). Based on comparisons of the archaeological finds with the literary evidence (such as the dedication of a palla with golden threads to Juno during the Second Punic War), Margarita Gleba and Sanna Lipkin argued that textile production took place in Archaic and Classical sanctuaries in Central and Southern Italy for the purposes of making clothing for statues of deities, for ritual participants or for religious objects (Gleba 2009; Lipkin 2012). Lipkin in particular investigated the symbolic significance of women's weaving work in this context: the frequent connection of weaving with singing in the Indo-European tradition and the importance of spinning and weaving as ritual actions.

One of the many benefits this "second-wave" perspective has brought to the study of Greco-Roman religion is the increasing integration of both men and women, both literary and material evidence, and both "public" and "private/domestic" rituals (see Chapter 5) into a shared idea of ancient religious life. This is undoubtedly a challenge, but the desideratum of integrating literary and material evidence as cultural products of *the same* culture is now in the mainstream (Kindt 2011). In a recent review of the scholarly debate about the interpretation of the Brauronia, Stehle suggests that we cannot understand this festival without considering the context of other ritual practices in contemporary Greek religious culture (Stehle 2012). The problem of just how we are to integrate the often quite varied bits and pieces is a difficult one, often requiring engagement with multiple types of evidence and with diverse methodologies.

The challenges of developing such a comprehensive view are well addressed in an edited volume of John Bodel and Saul Olyan, who especially emphasize the need to reach beyond the restrictions of oppositional pairs – including literary and material, public and private, men and women, and so on (2008). For example, in his study for the volume, Christopher Faraone discusses the roles of both men and women in Classical household and family cults in Attica, which – while distinct – undermine a neat separation of the two areas (2008), and Deborah Boedeker emphasizes the integration of domestic cults into *polis* life (2008). Further, these wider perspectives allow scholars to consider where lack of evidence, for example in votive material, may be a matter of socioeconomic realities rather than lack of interest (Dillon 2002: 297). It has now been firmly established also for the Roman evidence that men and women together participated in rituals that we had thought separated them (Schultz 2006 in general; Dolanski 2011 for

the Matronalia). Similarly, Hans-Friedrich Mueller brought together Latin literary and epigraphic evidence to study both elite male descriptions and women's actual religious experience (2011).

Beyond (Wo)men

Since the late 1990s a number of theoretical movements (third-wave feminism, queer theory, masculinity theory, to mention the key ones) challenged the basic assumptions of many earlier studies, especially the notion that our scholarly project is to identify and describe the distinct gender attributes characteristic of a particular historical society. The homogeneity of women as a category and the priority of this commonality of gender over other social markers were especially disputed. In this vein, scholars called for the study of gender to be integrated among a number of other variables in our analyses. Within Classical antiquity, this argument emerged forcefully in a 1998 edited volume by Sandra Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan which compared the experience of women and that of slaves in Graeco-Roman culture, and suggested that material culture is key to our understanding of how *both* gender and social roles were shaped in the ancient world (1998).

The emergence of these questions has also been part of an important theoretical shift, probably best articulated by Rosemary Joyce, who suggested that we need to move beyond the earlier, largely semiotic analysis of the objectified body as an open surface onto which such signification can be projected without any constraints (Joyce 2004). Scholarly emphasis moves from the idea of the gendered body – the body of a generalized agent or actor – to the ongoing, lived experience of the subject, situated by a number of variables such as gender, status and age, and positioned within their historical and social context. This new archaeology of "embodied subjectivity" centers on "the shaping of the physical person as the site of the experience of subjectivity," who, however, also goes on to enact (and possibly innovates upon) the various social norms by which it has been shaped (Joyce 2004: 84). Archaeological literature on this matter relies heavily on the work of Judith Butler and her concept of gender as based not on the physical attributes of the bodies, but on "the performance of bodies in social constructed gendered activities" (Fisher and Loren 2003: 228; but note the important critical comments of Hollywood 2006). The answer to the question whether we should see these performances as constitutive of "identities" remains a matter of perspective and debate (for the arguments see Meskell 2001; see also Chapter 32).

In this theoretical perspective first came observations about women's presence at funerary rituals; second, the difference between the roles of men and women at funerals could be emphasized; and now, building on all that previous work, Timothy McNiven (2000) could point to a more complicated distribution of gendered attitudes in vase paintings, suggesting that there may be more at stake than just distinguishing women as lacking emotional self-control at such ritual scenes, tearing their hair, raising their arms to beat their heads, in contrast to the orderly rank of men who perform a *dirge*. McNiven raised the problem that the lack of facial expressions in vase painting makes us rely on ritualized movements to "read" emotions in individuals – an issue particularly acute when we try to understand depictions including ritual participation. Based on the

absence of markers for emotions, he also argued that the vases' iconography relies on the same means of pose, compositional placement and gesture to mark boys and old men, who appear to act as women in these rituals (McNiven 2000: 72–75). In other words, gender is just one of many variables on these vase paintings.

A related question concerns whether focusing primarily on the male and female genders of religious actors is the best approach: probably the most notorious problem within antiquity in this regard is that of the *galli*, the castrated priests of Magna Mater. In a pair of interestingly divergent readings of gender, and based primarily on literature, Will Roscoe argued that such priests, across a variety of pre-modern cultures, formed what could be seen as a third sex, while Lynn Roller suggested that the *galli* lacked gender, not even qualifying for either the category of males or of females (Roscoe 1996; Roller 1997). Turning to the depictions of these priests Shelley Hales found that they emphasize jewelry and bright colors but hide the fact whether the men were castrated or not; thereby deliberately masking the signs of gender identity (Hales 2002). Integrating material and textual evidence in this regard can be particularly rewarding, as Mary Beard showed when she re-opened the scholarly dialogue about the ancient discomfort concerning the role of the *galli* in the city of Rome (Beard 2012). In this case, the rich textual evidence for the castrated priests' alterity can be contrasted with the wealth of such priestly depictions on funeral monuments, with the practically seamless integration of their annual festival and procession into Rome's religious calendar, and with the central location of their temple (where they also lived) on the Palatine. Beard argues that these varied constructions of the *galli* as "in" or "out" were part of an *ancient* debate concerning the proper Roman interactions with the gods (Beard 2012: 351).

A similar case of discomfort, probably both ancient and modern, occurs in the use of Greek mythological panels in Pompeian houses as discussed by Beth Severy-Hoven (2012). Building on the work of Fredrick (1995) and Boydston (2008), and focusing on the House of the Vettii, Severy-Hoven challenges the capacity of gender alone to explicate the choice of mythological scenes that reference the divine overpowering of humans (both men and women) and male bodies torn apart. On her view, it is the changing relations of power – which include the freedmen owner's rise from submissive to active roles as well as their new-found power to subordinate others, male or female alike, and the inevitably complex psychological experiences of those owners and owned – that are expressed via these mythological references. Gender here is mixed in with themes of sexuality, slavery and, we might add, rich allusions to the precariousness of divine power. On Severy-Hoven's reading the master's gaze onto this loose assemblage of mythological narratives is conditioned by the interrelated realities of social status, gender, sexuality in Roman imperial society. As a practically opposite trajectory "beyond gender" we can compare Severy-Hoven's socially conditioned gaze to Jaś Elsner's notion of a "religious gaze," as one whose aim is "to undermine the multiple discourses of the social arena, the screen of signs produced by and carried over from 'everyday life'" (Elsner 2007: 25). Elsner contrasts this concept of ritual-centered visuality to the visuality of what he calls naturalism, a strategy of interpreting images through the rules and desires of everyday life, and posits that the two co-existed in the ancient world. His theory implies a complicated grammar of religious visuality in the ancient world in which the gendering of images as male or female may have had only limited social referentiality.

Another interesting trajectory of thinking about these varied roles of gender concerns religious experiences that place individuals together *independently* of their social status. An excellent example comes from mystery initiations, even though explicit evidence confirming that initiates of both genders could share a strong, transformative experience together does not exist until the late Hellenistic and Imperial periods. Inscriptions from this later period, however, preserve evidence of religious celebrations beyond the traditional civic cults in which men and women participated together and in which, as Angelos Chaniotis recently argued, ritual participation fostered the development of the cult community into an "emotional community" (2011; see also Chapter 34). Inscriptions record that male and female worshippers of the Mother of the Gods at Leukopetra or those of Asclepius on the Insula Tiberina in Rome, shared miracle narratives and celebrated them in festive events that could be described as "a joint feeling of joy" (*synchairomai*): at issue here is not women's presence in these festivities, but their participation independently of their gender.

Conclusion

The argument that gender may not be a useful *pre-established* category of analysis in historical studies has recently been put forward rather forcefully by Jeanne Boydston, who argued that "there is no social subject whose experience is solely constructed through the processes of gender (however we define gender), [...] even an identity as male or female is in constant and inseparable interplay with other processes of status and identity" (Boydston 2008: 576). On this view, how gender functions will be distinct in varied cultures or at different times, and, further, it will always be enacted in relation to other social distinctions. Such a perspective forces us to question, at the outset of any archaeology of religion, how our notion of "gender" may relate to the societies we study – a perspective that is rather familiar to us as scholars who learnt not to take ancient "religion" to stand for the etic category of what we understand by that word in our contemporary world.

But this is not just a cautionary tale. At this particular time in scholarship there is a notable parallel between emerging ideas in the study of gender in the archaeology of religion on the one hand, and recent theories of ritual, without a specific focus on gender within religious studies on the other hand. This convergence of interest around the notions of *embodiment* and *enactment* very much concerns the archaeology of religion in the Greco-Roman world as outlined above. Scholars studying the archaeology of gender and religion have emphasized how repetitive *enactments* constitute *embodied* religious experience and thereby shape the "embodied subjectivity" of individuals, while researchers in religious studies have moved from a notion of ritual as symbolic action referencing some other meaning to highlighting the *enactment* of rituals as "apt performances," and, at least in part, (self-)disciplinary practices (Hollywood 2006). The foremost theoretical junction for these studies is Catherine Bell's notion of ritualization – to replace the static idea of ritual —— which emphasizes how humans mark certain practices as rituals. This is an active process that produces *ritualized agents* "who have an instinctive knowledge of these schemes embedded in their bodies, in their sense of reality, and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex microrelation of power" (Bell 1992: 221).

For such a dynamic understanding of ancient religion it is not sufficient to study singular items, whether literary or material, in isolation. The job is to compare and contextualize what we can from the surviving texts, artifacts and monuments: depictions of the divine and the worshippers in words and images, in spaces imaginary and real, as well as the many varieties of enacted rituals and embodied experiences. At the current stage of scholarly discussion, there can be little doubt that it is only by a combination of methodologies and evidence from the history and archaeology of religion and only via a consideration of the rich varieties of social status and gender in shaping them that we can appreciate these processes and thereby religion itself in Greco-Roman antiquity.

Guide to Further Reading

The study of ancient gender is a rich field with too many excellent works to reference here. A good introduction, with further bibliography, is offered by Hubbard (2014). Jennifer Larson's chapter in that volume offers an insightful introduction into the religious aspects of sexual behavior and fertility in the ancient world. There are numerous area- and period-specific overviews such as the ones by Matthew Dillon (2002), Susan G. Cole (2004), Cecilia E. Schultz (2006), Joan B. Conelly (2007) and Sarolta A. Takács (2008) that incorporate both literary and archaeological evidence. The complex interrelations of gender and religion with other social categories have been explored by Amy Richlin (1997), and in a number of the essays in collected volumes such as the ones edited by Ellen D. Reeder (1995), Maria Wyke (1998), and Lena Larsson Lovén and Agneta Strömberg (2003).

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PART III

Experiences

CHAPTER 10

Polychromy and Jewish Visual Culture of Roman Antiquity[1]

Steven Fine

The Arch of Titus Digital Restoration Project is the first major research project related to polychromy in an artifact of significance for the history of Judaism as yet undertaken (Figure 10.1). It is, in fact, part of a larger transformation in contemporary scholarship, whereby the significance of polychromy in ancient art has become a major new preoccupation. The purpose of this chapter is to present a kind of prolegomenon to the study of polychromy in ancient Jewish visual culture, both in terms of Jewish studies in Roman antiquity and within the larger frame of Roman art and archaeology. I will focus upon the polychromy of the menorah, and suggest some of the implications of this work for the larger study of Jewish culture during this period.

Truth be told, it is astonishing that the discovery of a few dots of yellow paint on the Arch of Titus menorah became international news. Any reader of the Bible, Josephus, or the Talmud (Fine 2005a: 148–65; 2013; forthcoming) could reasonably ask, as some innocent members of the public have, "What other color would it be?" This question is far more insightful than it appears at first glance. Polychromy presents a stark contrast to the neo-classical and modernist fascination with whiteness, with black, white, and the shades in between. One modern author, David Bachelor, has even referred to this fascination with whiteness to the exclusion of color as "chromophobia," intending the sense of irrationality that the term "phobia" connotes (2000; Bolman 2006). In her 2006 essay, Elizabeth S. Bolman used the term "chromophobia" in relation to classical and late antique art, writing that "Western art and architectural historians have traditionally had something of a love affair with pristine white classical sculpture and architecture, often ignoring the colored paint that embellished both" (2006). Jan Stubbe Østergaard goes further: "A powerful trinity of Western ideals of the highest order—aesthetic, philosophical, and ideological—were grafted onto the white marble surface at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The rediscovery of the polychromy of ancient sculpture and architecture accordingly meant—and still means—to challenge these ideals

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to their very core" (2008: 82). Chromophobia has even touched the Arch of Titus Project. Soon after the announcement of our discovery in the *New York Times*, (Povoledo 2012) an author in *The New Republic* attacked our enthusiasm for this work, and the discoveries themselves. Rochelle Gurstein expressed disdain for any work that changes the image of the ancient Rome preserved in the writings of Edward Gibbon (Gibbon 1781) or in the engravings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (Battista Piranesi 1750). Gurstein wrote: "I was struck by the international reach—Bavaria, New York, Virginia, Rome—of this project to get the colors of ancient Rome right; and how the image of a brightly colored ancient Rome felt as disorienting to me as the image of a medieval Rome with ancient monuments turned into fortresses. But I also could not help thinking that this international project was another sign of the predominance these days of science and technique over humane learning…" (2012).

During the 1980s, scholars – mainly museum professionals – focused their attention on pigment remains on Greek and Roman artifacts. Scholars in Copenhagen and Munich in particular focused upon the discovery and reconstruction of the original polychromy of ancient artifacts, mounting exhibitions – some of them called *Bunte Götter*, and *Gods in Color* – in Munich, Istanbul, Cambridge MA, Berlin, Malibu, and other cultural centers (Brinkmann and Wünsche 2004; 2007; Brinkmann, Primavesi, and Hollein 2010; website of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen: www.trackingcolour.com). The next generation of scholars, Europeans and Americans, scoured classical sources for mention of ancient polychromy and studied additional objects, more recently broadening their studies to include Assyrian and other near eastern artifacts (Verri et al. 2009; Bradley 2009; www.trackingcolour.com). The ancient world that they have discovered is a true "carousel of color," as Walt Disney called it in the theme song of his long-running television program, "the world is a carousel of color, wonderful, wonderful color" (Telotte 2008: 53–5). "Baby boomers," those of us brought up on the transition from black and white television to color (which hit its stride in the mid-1960s), might well remember celebratory messages declaring, "The following program is brought to you in living color." For those still watching black and white televisions, the lesson was clear. Recently, Mary Bergstein has made a similar point regarding human perceptions of color in dreams, arguing that the technology with which we live determines the color of human dreams. Thus, in a period when black and white photography was the norm, informants suggest that they dreamed in black and white, and with the transition to color photography and cinematography, dreams were reported to be polychromic. She applies this insight to art historical interpretation, suggesting that the technology of presentation – especially black and white photography – has determined and limited interpretation (Bergstein 2012: 132–5).

Questions concerning the polychromy of Jewish artifacts are all the more problematic. Among the well-known racial claims for Jewish artistic deficiency made during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, perhaps the oddest was the claim that Jews are deficient in their capacity to perceive color – that they have a propensity for color-blindness (Patai and Patai 1989: 287–9). This approach ascribed Jewish artlessness to a racial characteristic. This notion found popular expression in an essay by Immanuel Benzinger, a German Protestant scholar of the Old Testament

in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1902). In his oft-cited entry, "Art of the Ancient Hebrews," Benzinger explains that:

> It was the religion of the Jews that precluded the full development of the art of sculpture, and so confined it within the above-mentioned narrow limits. In the most ancient times, when images were not proscribed, the technical ability to make them artistically was lacking; and when in later periods this artistic skill might have been acquired from others, images were forbidden. The persistent fight of the Prophets against images was waged with such success that in the end not only was any representation of the Deity forbidden, but even the portraiture of living beings in general, man or beast. Such a command as that of the Decalogue (*Exodus* 20.4; *Deuteronomy* 5.8) would have been impossible to a nation possessed of such artistic gifts as the Greeks, and was carried to its ultimate consequences—as to-day in Islam—only because the people lacked artistic inclination, with its creative power and formative imagination. *The same reason, to which is to be added a defective sense of color* (1901–5: 141, emphasis mine; see also Delitzsch 1889 Benzinger 1901–5: 268ff.).

Perhaps the most startling thing about this statement is that it appears in a distinctly Jewish context, with no hint of explicit anti-Semitism. Benzinger supports his assertion through citation of the great philo-semitic Protestant Bible scholar Franz Delitzsch, whose *Iris, Farbenstudien und Blumenstücke* had appeared in Leipzig in 1888 and in English in 1889, leaving no doubt of Benzinger's accuracy. The problem is that even the briefest perusal of Delitzsch's "Iris" completely debunks Benzinger's assertion, which Delitzsch clearly perceived to be an antisemitic slight (Delitzsch 1888: 101–28). Delitzsch drew his proofs from Jewish literature of antiquity, perhaps the most ingenious of which is his assertion that rabbinic sources that discuss slight distinctions in color between, say, blue and green at dawn and the colors of menstrual blood, reflect the deep color nuance of which rabbis were capable.

Yet Benzinger is not the only scholar to present color deficiency as a Jewish trait in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. In another *Jewish Encyclopedia* article, New York "physician and anthropologist," Maurice Fishberg (Vizetelly 1901–5: 404) summarizes the *communis opinio* among his mainly Jewish colleagues, ascribing supposed high levels of color-blindness among Jews to social conditions:

> The average percentage of color-blindness among Jews examined by Cohn, Carl, Ottolenghi, and others, is about 4 per cent. Among the English Jews Jacobs has found that it is more than three times as large as this. These investigations confirm the general observations that color-blindness is more frequent in men than in women. They also show that the East End (London) Jews, who are poorer, have a larger percentage of color-blindness than their wealthier brethren of the West End. Jacobs attributes color-blindness to the fact that the Jews are town-dwellers, where comparatively so little color, and especially so little green, is to be met with (Jacobs and Spielman 1890: 83–4).

To this high proportion of color-blindness he also attributes "the absence of any painters of great ability among Jews, and the want of taste shown by Jewesses of the lower grades of society," which manifests itself in the preference for bright primary colors for wearing-apparel.

> It must also be remembered that, in the main, the Jews in almost every country are poor. They are consequently the class of people which is most predisposed to color-blindness. In the "Report" of the Committee on Color-Blindness appointed by the Ophthalmological Society of London it is stated that the reason for the high percentage of color-blindness found among the Jews lies in the fact that those of them who were examined were principally of the poorer class (Fishberg 1901–5: 311–3).

For Fishberg, unusually high levels of Jewish color-blindness were a reality. It was caused by poverty, and not by Judaism itself, as it was for Benzinger. Jacobs and his collaborator, Isidore Spielman, conclude their article by suggesting that:

> Where there is so large an amount of total colour blindness, there must also co-exist a still larger proportion of dulled sense of colour and a general lack of interest in the delights of colour, especially in its more refined forms. It seemed to us worth while calling attention to this defect, as it is probable that early training can in some measure overcome it, and it is clear that colour lessons should form part of every Jewish child's training (Jacobs and Spielman 1890: 84).

The generous inclusion of Jewish visual culture—including numerous color plates—in the beautifully designed *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Fine 2005: 19–20) are indeed intended to distance the Americanized community that produced it from charges of artlessness and color-blindness.

An additional aspect of the Jewish experience has discouraged the study of polychromy in Jewish art and architecture. The omnipresence of black and white photography of Eastern European Jewry before the Second World War and especially during the Holocaust has served to reinforce a melancholy ("lachrymose") view of Eastern European Jewish culture, and at the same time to push that world farther into the past than it actually is. Samuel Gruber, head of the Jewish section of the World Monuments Society, made a similar point when a series of brilliantly colored tombstones was discovered in Radom, Ukraine:

> These finds give impetus to a reevaluation of Jewish religious, popular and folk art in Eastern Europe. Because so much art was destroyed in the Holocaust, and because most of what was documented is known only in black and white images, we have inherited a skewed view of Jewish aesthetics. The veil of memory, inevitably somber and dark because of the tragedy of the Holocaust, has dimmed much of the exuberant color of pre-Holocaust Jewish life.

Scholars of Jewish art, particularly of ancient synagogues, medieval manuscripts, and wooden painted synagogues, have long recognized the exuberant color of this material. The point I am making is that while "chromophobia" was an established position in regard to classical and neo-classical art, it was an even greater problem for Jewish materials, further distancing the possibility of really engaging this material.

This is not to say that some tentative steps were not under way. An exhibition entitled *Colors from Nature: Natural Colors in Ancient Times* at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv in 1993 was moving in this direction (Soreq and Ayalon 1994). Sylvia Rozenberg's work on the pigments and color decoration of Herod's palaces and on the Herodian temple at Omrit in northern Israel might be particularly suggestive for reimagining the polychromy of the Jerusalem Temple (1994, 2008, 2011, 2013; Netzer et al. 2013; Fine 2013b) Purple (*argamon*) and royal blue (*tekhelet*) dyes extracted from Muricidae

Figure 10.1 Bas relief of the Spoils of Jerusalem, Arch of Titus, 81 CE. Courtesy of the Arch of Titus Digital Restoration Project.

mollusks – well known from classical, biblical and rabbinic literatures – have been a subject of particular interest to Jewish and Israeli scholars since Isaac Herzog's groundbreaking 1913 dissertation (Herzog 1987; Koren 2012). On a communal level, this research has been essential to a resurgence in the wearing of royal blue ritual fringes (responding to Numbers 15:37–41) among some Orthodox Jews (Sterman and Taubes Sterman 2012). My own concern with polychromy was sparked by a group of sources preserved in rabbinic literature that refer explicitly to color. Frankly, I was not sure what to do with these sources, which jostled my preconceptions as well as my imagination, until I encountered the reconstruction of the polychromy on the so-called Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great carried out by Brinkmann and his team at the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul (Brinkmann 2007: 168–70). That vivid recreation was a jolt, and sent me in the direction of reevaluating both literary sources and ancient Jewish visual culture (Fine 2013a: 51–100).

Polychromy and the Arch of Titus

Anyone who is even somewhat familiar with ancient Jewish literature would assume that the menorah was golden (Fine 2005b, 2007; Millar 2005; Beard 2003, 2007: 151–3; Boustan 2008). That does not mean, though, that the artisans who carved the bas-relief applied color, nor does it tell us how they applied it. From the very preliminary results, testing six locations on the branches and base of the menorah, it does not appear that there was any variance in the color of the gold of the menorah. My sense is that this has implications for the actual menorah, brought to Rome from Jerusalem and exhibited just meters away in Vespasian's Temple of Peace. The image on the arch must have been generally similar to the golden Temple menorah nearby. Still, it is surprising that the menorah on the relief was painted, and not gilt. Peter Schertz notes that, based upon

Latin sources, Domitian was no slacker when it came to the use of real gold (Darwell-Smith 1996: 105–10; Jones 1993: 1, 92, 96). Does the discovery of paint, Schertz wonders, raise the question of whether at some point actual gold was used, only to be removed later during one or another of Rome's economic crises and replaced with paint? The discovery of pigment has other implications. We might speculate that the description of Josephus and the rabbis, following Scripture, of a golden table of showbread and of silver horns might also have been depicted in the arch panel. If this is the case, the high relief of the menorah and the relatively low relief of the table, angled toward the arch of the Roman triumph, carry the movement of this image forward in ways that are far less obvious when the panel is viewed in bright white marble.

To release imagination just a bit more, the procession of Roman celebrants in white or even purple tunics, their skin ruddy and heads bedecked with laurel wreaths, perhaps against a blue background (as some scholars have suggested) provides an almost life-like image of the menorah and vessels being brought into Rome. Setting the stage for this suggestion, Josephus describes the rich polychromy of the garments worn in Titus' triumphal parade – though not specifically of those carrying the Temple booty. He writes that:

> The numerous attendants conducting each group of animals were decked in garments of true purple dye, interwoven with gold; while those selected to take part in the pageant itself had about them choice ornaments of amazing richness.
>
> Moreover, even among the mobs of captives, none was seen unadorned, the variety and beauty of their dresses concealing from view any unsightliness arising from bodily disfigurement (Josephus, *The Jewish War* 7.137–8; see also 7.152).

A visitor in the latter first or second century could literally walk under the arch – having come from the Flavian theater (i.e., the Coliseum which, according to an inscription, was built with funds gained from the Judaean War) (Alföldy 1995; Feldman 2001), and move forward with the bas-relief of Titus riding his *quadriga* to his right and the soldiers carrying the spolia of the Jerusalem Temple to his left all in bright and almost "life-like" color. Above, at the apex of the arch, the divine Titus ascends to heaven riding on the back of an eagle. The Roman visitor could figuratively escort this procession into Rome, through the arch, and to their final resting place down the hill mere meters away in the Temple of Peace – a ritualization of imperial Flavian piety (Beard 2007: 151–3). The bas-reliefs parallel the sense of movement in Josephus's description, though Josephus, the Jewish priest from Jerusalem turned rebel general turned Roman lackey, is far more deadpan in his description than the exuberant – and Jewishly unencumbered – painted bas-reliefs are. I quote just a small section of Josephus's description:

> The spoils in general were borne in promiscuous heaps; but conspicuous above all stood those captured in the temple at Jerusalem. These consisted of a golden table, many talents in weight, and a lampstand, likewise made of gold, but constructed on a different pattern than those which we use in ordinary life. Affixed to a pedestal was a central shaft, from which there extended slender branches, arranged trident-fashion, a wrought lamp being attached to the extremity of each branch, of these there were seven, indicating the honor paid to that number among the Jews. After these, and last of all the spoils, was carried a copy of the Jewish Law. They followed a large party carrying images of victory, all made of ivory and gold. Behind them drove Vespasian, followed by Titus; while Domitian rode beside them, in magnificent apparel and mounted on a steed that was in itself a sight.

> The triumphal ceremonies being concluded and the empire of the Romans established on the firmest foundation, Vespasian decided to erect a temple of Peace. This was very speedily completed and in a style surpassing all human conception. For, besides having prodigious resources of wealth on which to draw he also embellished it with ancient masterworks of painting and sculpture; indeed, into that shrine were accumulated and stored all objects for the sight of which men had once wandered over the whole world, eager to see them severally while they lay in various countries. Here, too, he laid up the vessels of gold from the temple of the Jews, on which he prided himself; but the Law and the purple hangings of the sanctuary he ordered to be deposited and kept in the palace (Josephus, *The Jewish War* 7.148–62).

The brightly-painted image of this event on the Arch of Titus would have been, for Jewish viewers, far more intense than the mere white shadows that we see today. The implications of this colorization for the study of the Jewish viewing of Roman art are significant. Images such as that of the arch would be that much more "real" and evocative. Thus, images that Jews construed as "idolatrous" or otherwise evocative of Roman imperialism would have been experienced with an intensity that we can only now understand. This became clear to me in viewing Brinkmann's reconstruction of the coloration of a bust of Caligula from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, displayed at the J. Paul Getty Museum as part of their exhibition, *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present* (Panzanelli 2008). My first experience of Caligula, face to face as it were, in full color, led me to gasp and think: "Now I get what they were so upset about!" In fact, scholars of robotics have suggested this very sense of approximating, but not quite reaching, full humanity causes revulsion or fear in humans. They refer to this effect as "the uncanny valley" (see Mori 1970; Seyama 2007). The significance of this effect for the study of Jewish attitudes to Roman art may now be recognized as enormous. Consider, for example, the now very clear—and colorful—sense that we have of what exactly Jews "saw" when, say, Rabban Gamaliel bathed in the "Baths of Aphrodite" (*Avodah Zarah* 3.1), claiming that "I did not come into her domain, she came into mine" or when they practiced a form of cultural resistance in not looking at "idols" – as in Jerusalem Talmud tractate *Avodah Zarah* 3.13; 43b (see Fine 2005a: 113–4).

> Gamaliel Zuga supported himself on Rabbi Simeon son of Laqish [as they walked].
> When they reached an image, he (Gamaliel Zuga) said to him:
> "Should we pass before it?"
> He (Rabbi Simeon son of Laqish) said: "Pass before it and put its eyes out."
>
> Rabbi Isaac son of Matnah supported himself on Rabbi Johanan.
> When they reached the statue at the *boule* (the council building), he (Rabbi Isaac son of Matnah) said to him:
> "Should we pass before it?"
> He (Rabbi Johanan) said: "Pass before it and put its eyes out."
>
> Rabbi Jacob son of Idi supported himself on Rabbi Joshua son of Levi.
> They reached the image of *aduri* (or alternately, they came behind an image).
> He (Rabbi Joshua son of Levi) said to him:
> "Nahum of the Holy of Holies would pass, and you, you do not [wish to] pass? Pass before it and put its eyes out…."

Figure 10.2 Detail of the menorah on the bas relief of the Spoils of Jerusalem. Courtesy of the Arch of Titus Digital Restoration Project.

While our understanding of the polychromy of any particular artifact may not influence the particular interpretation of any text, it does provide a wider context within which to comprehend the broader experience of "idolatry" by Jews and the more sustained sense of imperial presence experienced by one particularly literate people in the eastern Roman Empire who had been colonized.

In this chapter I have focused upon the image of the menorah and on the Arch of Titus – specifically because of the richness of both visual and textual sources – as a way of demonstrating the value of polychromy studies for our understanding of ancient Judaism. These examples are just a beginning, as detailed scholarship on Greco-Roman period Jewish perceptions and deployment of color remains a desideratum, particularly in rabbinic literature, and beginning with the type of basic research carried out in regard to biblical literature by Athalya Brenner and Roman sources by Mark Bradley (Brenner 1982; Bradley 2009; Ulmer 2010). UV scanning of artifacts from Jewish antiquity similar to that carried out on Roman art, including the Arch of Titus, is an important next step. Polychromy in the visual culture of Roman antiquity presents us with a colorful opportunity and challenge, one that I anticipate will impact the study of culture in ways that we are just beginning to imagine in the years to come.

Guide to Further Reading

The best introduction to issues of polychromy in ancient art is Brinkmann and Wünsche (2007). On Jewish visual culture in general, including the historiography of ancient Jewish art, see Fine (2005a; 2013). On the Arch of Titus, see Pfanner (1983).

NOTE

[1]This chapter is a somewhat abbreviated version of my fully illustrated article, "Menorahs in Color" (2012). For the preliminary report of this research, see Piening (2012).

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CHAPTER 11

Watching Rituals

Valérie Huet

In the Roman Empire, most people could watch most of public rituals as they were happening in open space: in sanctuaries, around the altar, when offerings and sacrifices were given to deities, in city streets, along roads in the countryside for processions and festivals. Watchers could be the people attending, Roman priests, Roman citizens, but also children, freedmen, slaves, or foreigners. Of course, gods were also following the rituals, and they were doing it by being physically present, mainly through the medium of their statues placed outside or in temples with open doors (see Estienne 2001 on images and Chapters 23 and 24). However, some public rituals could not be seen by everybody: for instance, the *sacra* for Bona Dea celebrated each year in early December by Roman *matronae* and by the Vestal virgins on behalf of the Roman people. These were performed in a private home, the house of one of the two consuls or of the *praetor*, but in the absence of men as the rules excluded any male presence. Secrecy was also the key to mystery cults such as the Eleusinian cults in Greece, some of the Dionysiac rituals in Greco-Roman culture, or the Mithriac cults in the Roman Empire, as they were all presupposing initiation. Roman domestic religion could be practiced and seen only by the *familia* inside the *domus* or *villa*, though maybe some guests and friends could have access to it.

Thus we have two preliminary questions: Who was watching or could watch rituals? And: What could be viewed? Further questions concern the experience itself. Did viewers live and share the same experience at the same time in the same space? Would a foreigner be able to follow and understand what was to be seen in open spaces? Would a Roman senator recognize and identify all the elements of some Roman festivals in Roman Egypt, or in Roman Gaul and Germany? In which ways were social status or the belonging to one specific city, community, group interfering in the understanding of rituals? And how much viewing was embedded in contemporary culture?

Some "basic forms of cult seem to have been recognizable enough", such as sacrifices, libations, helped by the surroundings (temples, altars, statues of gods), throughout space

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and time, as Fritz Graf wrote about rituals in ancient Mediterranean religion (2007: 11–14). But the visibility of the ritual and its basic understanding does not imply correctly interpreting the performance, the diverse gestures and roles of the participants nor recognizing the name of the deity to whom it was offered.

In some other ancient cultures, we have further problems in understanding who could get a glimpse at what ritual. For instance, in ancient Egypt, though a number of ritual texts survived, the information given is about some deities, some prescriptive prayers, and explains partly the roles of the Pharao and priests, but it is difficult to deduce who could watch rituals, except the priests themselves, the Pharao, and the gods. The archaeological remains of temples show that they were built in such a way that they were defining restrictive spaces, forbidding access to most of the people (see Assmann 1994; Volokhine 2008). This chapter does not browse the viewing of rituals in all ancient religions, but it focuses on some visual experiences in Roman religion and offers further instances by comparison.

Watching the Viewers: A Recent Topic?

Rituals had always been at the core of the study of ancient religions. To reconstruct ritual gestures in their chronological order, their span of time, to attribute them to specific characters in a given time and space is central to the game that historians of religions entertain with diverse ancient data: literature, epigraphy, images, archaeology. The scarcity of the information and its gathering is part of the fun; thanks to written sources and *realia*, material remains, hypotheses can be brought up, sometimes even proved, *praxis* can be understood. Usually, the human beings present at any ritual are divided between active and passive participants, each one playing its prescribed role, more or less important in the communication with gods. So these roles have to be pinned down. Who was there? What did he (more rarely she) do? These are two questions that have always been addressed to some extent in research. And some answers come clearly from epigraphy, like the written records of the Arval Brothers, which give the names of those who were present, and for which ceremony (Scheid 1990, 2005). What or which part of ritual could she or he have properly seen is a rarer and more recent question, which before was only raised when there was a well-known exclusion of some categories of people. The topic of the experience of watching rituals is even newer, except when it concerns mocking superstitious attitudes (cf. for instance ancient Christian discourses versus what they called paganism; Estienne 2001). Its freshness derives probably on the one hand from present-day preoccupations regarding both social and individual experiences, experiments, emotions and feelings, that result in an introspective analysis of our methodology; on the other hand, from our interest to introduce ancient (and modern) viewers for further understanding and reading of visual art.

Watching as a Full Experience: Watching, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching

Taking part in ritual in Rome is about identity, acknowledgment of belonging to a community. It is also about communication, communication between members of the group and deities, communication between the members themselves. As Jörg Rüpke (2012)

claims, religion is an important field in public communication in Rome. Changes through the period of the Roman Republic (but we could also add Roman Empire) can partly be explained by growing needs of communication and by increasing competition between élite members, senators, then emperors. The visibility of rituals goes along with the desire to be seen, to watch and to be watched, and with the desire to please gods, but not only that but to also please an audience. Some rituals such as supplications were used to mobilize the entire population to respond to a crisis, to a defeat in a war for instance. Watching those rituals was a way of taking part in them in order to strengthen solidarity within the Roman population. Women and children were no longer "passive agents", as viewers were supposed to be able to see for instance women, *matronae*, with their long hair hanging on temples' pavements and dusting them! But most of the time, taking part in rituals was about standing on a street or watching a game after a procession. According to Rüpke (2012: 30), "the gods were therefore the target audience of the ritual, and the Roman spectators were only second-class spectators." But soon, these latter became also one of the main targets of aristocratic competition, and then of the emperors and of the senators of that time, and not only in Rome (see Varhelyi 2010).

But was watching just about watching? If we reflect upon sacrificial ritual, are we not, as the supposed crowd, hearing beautiful or loud noises and smelling wonderful or strong odors? Was not the veil on the top of the head of the sacrificant in the Roman *ritus* supposed to suppress bad noises and to enable full concentration on rituals as much as the music played by *tibicines* (players of the double flute) or other musicians (Huet 2012)? But as part of the crowd, could we even hear the *tibia*? Was not music part of the indispensable play of ritual? Was not the beautiful music, accompanying choirs of young boys and girls, part of the songs and prayers (*carmina*) offered to the gods? But who could really hear or listen to them while musicians and singers were progressing walking along streets? Hearing (not listening to) loud and discordant music was a sign of misfortune, mainly of funeral dealings, but it could also be a signal for fire, for burning houses (cf. Petronius, *Satyricon* 78.5–8; Scheid 1984). Awful noisy music was a way to turn people away, to make them not watch, in order to prevent them from not being able to fulfill their private and public duties as a consequence of discomforting sights. Combined with the sight of cypress branches on each side of a house door, such noise was the confirmation of a house in mourning. The priest *(flamen)* of Jupiter was holding a position at an extreme as he could not "enter a place where there is a tomb, he never touches a dead body; he is not, however, prohibited from attending a funeral" (Aulus Gelllius, *Attic Nights* 10.15.24). Thus loud discordant noises probably helped him in avoiding such a confrontation. In the case of a funeral among his close family, he was obliged to be there; the dilemma was probably solved by the fact that a veil or a screen was put between him and the cadaver. Thus he could be seen as strictly following the prescriptions alongside his priesthood, at the same time honoring the deceased as family and *mores* were ordering him to attend; in a nutshell, he was observed as being there but not watching and not touching.

To watch or not to watch? That is not the only relevant question. Smelling something from far away would lead crowds to the burning altar. Smells had to be strong to reach the crowd as well as gods. Incense burning was inviting gods to come. Burning offerings, flowers, cakes but also part of animals, the relevant share of the sacrificial banquet, was not only about perfume but on sharing unequally meat and bones between gods and

men (on perfume: Bodiou, Frère, and Mehl 2008). Raw heads of animal victims such as bulls in public sacrifices were meant to ornament and decay on sacrificial altars, until the next sacrifice. Thus, bad-smelling old raw meat or bones lingered on. Hopefully, incense burning covered up part of those smells. And hopefully, cooked meat was part of the dinner served in banquets to the main agents, magistrates, the emperor, priests; the crowd could taste chops of victims after having cooked them at home for more or less private banquets, having either received its share or bought it.

Experiencing public rituals was also in color (not in black and white as modern viewers foolishly assume, with their romantic views of white ancient marbles). Blood was spread and splattered, redness being at the same time part of the garments of the officiants, of the senators or of the emperor.

Experiencing watching could go with touching in two ways. You could be one of the main performers, the sacrificant offering incense and wine on the altar, or you could be the sacrificer, one of the slaves leading victim animals to the altar, killing them and cutting or slicing them open. But you could also be one of the observers that could only reach the altar when too late, after the performance, touching the stone and the bucranion, the severed head attached to the altar. Finally, you could imagine touching the gods or goddesses by way of their images or cults (then, as a watcher, you are back to the starting point).

Watching Images of Rituals

One could watch a ritual directly or through its representations. In fact, images of rituals are widespread in Rome and its empire. As Inez Scott Ryberg (1955: 1) pointed out:

"Roman religion and the state were so closely interwoven that practically no aspect of Roman monumental art is without some religious implication … An astonishing number of the surviving historical reliefs represent the actual performance of religious rites, culminating – in fact or in implication – in a sacrifice. Thus the sacrificial scene is one of the key themes in Roman art, and one which inspired the talents and engaged the efforts of artists, in somewhat varying degree, throughout the entire history of Roman monumental relief."

These images ornate sacrificial altars, triumphal arches, columns, honorific monuments; but public space was not the only space invaded, as we can also look at reliefs or paintings displayed in private homes and on funerary monuments. Images circulate as they were minted on the reverse of coins. Strangely enough, at the exception of the temple of Apollo in circo in Rome, no sacrificial ritual is displayed on temples, the *aedes* or houses of gods; there, ritual is only alluded to through the representation of rows of instruments (e.g., *patera* and jug, knife and *situla*). At first view, Roman images of rituals seem to comprise a narrative, but one should not forget that showing a ritual on a non-moving image obliges the sculptor or the painter to synthesize the ritual according to choices that can differ from one place to another.

As viewers, we can recognize and restitute diverse stages of the process of the ritual in time and space: first, the procession, the *pompa*, which can be simple or not, involving few or many people, having no sacrificial animal or several, including one species of victims or several (mainly bull, sheep, pig); second, the libation, a performance not including animals, or the *praefatio* in presence of animals; third, the *immolatio* or the symbolic

offering of the victim; fourth, the actual killing of the animals; fifth, the probation of the animal or its acceptance by the god to whom it was offered; finally, the banquet. But this smooth sequential order of scenes never appears in this form on any single monument. We have to be aware that, most of the time, the precise boundaries of particular scenes in reliefs are the product of the viewer's understanding of what is going on in the ritual, depending on his or her knowledge and supplied by his or her own imagination. The frequency of representations of some phases of the ritual is clearly of central importance as it reveals to us the emphases desired and made by the sculptors and commissioners, and through them the particular cultural framework of Roman society and religion. Only one image out of circa one hundred fifty reliefs coming from Rome and Italy displays the fifth stage (relief of *litatio*, Paris, The Louvre) and only one image of banquet is clearly connected to sacrifice (relief of the banquet of the Vestal virgins, exhibited at the Ara Pacis Museum in Rome). What the sacrificial image mainly displays is, on the one hand, the procession revealing the importance of the sacrifice or of the festival, the main actors, the priests, the assistants, the slaves, and the offerings (the animals); on the other hand, the piety of the person who offers the sacrifice, who pours wine and incense into the flames of the altar.

What is at stake is clearly an hierarchy between human beings and deities, between human beings themselves, between human beings and the the animals being offered. Deities are rarely visible on those reliefs. When the emperor is depicted, he usually pours himself wine or incense on the altar, demonstrating his piety and, at the same time, his power. The menial tasks of bringing the animals and the shedding of blood are marked out as the work of slaves; thus, the few examples of the scenes of killing are not due to the existence of a taboo on death, but to the fact that in the killing, the protagonists are the animals and the slaves and not Roman citizens (Huet 2005). However, for instance, on the sarcophagus kept in the Altes Museum of Berlin (Figure 11.1), the sacrificial scene offers a synthesis of the *immolatio* and of the killing of the bull, underlining the role of the *imperator*. The crowd is rarely depicted; but we could argue that, as viewers, we are in its position. And, as ordinary spectators, we are not allowed to see the banquet. Latin literature and epigraphic data stress its unequal share between gods and men, and between the citizens themselves: in "real life", the sacrificial banquet was reserved to restricted people, an élite, this same élite who read books, who offered the sacrifice on behalf of the city. Thus in a big public Roman sacrifice—and this is confirmed by archaeological remains—the banquet could take place in a dining room next to the temple, in the sanctuary, and would welcome the priests and magistrates while the ordinary people would take part in the banquet by eating the sacrificial meat given to them or bought by them at the butcher. Images displayed on public sites could therefore only show those stages of sacrificial ritual which were happening outside in the open space, under the eyes of everybody.

In fact these probably offered a better view of what happened, as it was nearly impossible or difficult to approach the altar, except when directly involved as an "active agent" in the performance. And they propose a synthesis that can be read or seen at different levels, according to the degree of knowledge of each viewer. Sacrificial images played with the combination of generic and specific signs. At a basic level, an ordinary Roman citizen could fill gaps, because he knew of the festival, and also because he was himself offering sacrifices at home. But only the performers (and not even all of them) could

Figure 11.1 Detail of a sarcofagus, Berlin, Altes Museum, inv. 1987, 2; Severian. Photo by Valérie Huet.

properly understand the precise meanings of the ceremony represented. As John Scheid (1998) wrote in his analysis of the representation of the *Ludi Saeculares* on coins, images were comparable to the rites themselves as some encrypted signs could only be deciphered by the élite involved in those actions; the crowd did not watch any of the ritual gestures; therefore, their knowledge was as vague as that of a Roman citizen who was not present; to some extent their reading of the representation on coins was similar. However, one could add that these images on coins were reminding the actual population who took part in the *ludi* of impressive gatherings, of noises and smells, and of the impossibility of getting access to observe some ritual gestures.

If we look at sacrificial images throughout the territory of the Roman Empire, we can sometimes watch the same choices, putting forward the image of the emperor's piety as a model to follow. According to Richard Gordon, "one of the important new uses of sacrificial imagery by the emperors was in response to a difficult and indeed intractable problem, the character of the relationship between the 'religion of Rome' and the 'religion of the Roman Empire'" (1990: 206); his theory lies on the banality of sacrificial scenes that "are only about sacrifice in a very peculiar sense. They allude to a familiar public event in a schematic fashion which enables them to highlight the role of the sacrificant, not the communicative function of the ceremony (as earlier Greek reliefs had done, and even one or two Roman imitations in the Republic)" (204–5), and though not being meaningless, they were to a degree "vacant signs" (206). It is true there is an obvious shift taking place in Trajanic times, maybe a bit earlier if we focus on coins, from

Figure 11.2 Altar of the Matronae Aufaniae, Bonn, Museum. Photo after Espérandieu 1938: no. 7777.

an image involved in the presentation of a sacrifice to an image implied in the presentation of the person sacrificing. But in contrast to Gordon, I want to argue that it is due to its weight and strata of meanings both in Roman religion and in Roman society, its ability to define relationships between citizens and divinities and between citizens themselves that sacrificial scene was used or abused by Roman emperors.

The omnipresence of sacrifice on monuments is the confirmation in images of the hierarchical character of Roman society. This hierarchy can be expressed in diverse ways: for instance, in Roman Gaul (with the exception of the *Narbonensis*) and Germany, the highlight is on deities being nearly always represented, a number of times on a superior register, men being below. On the altar kept in the Museum of Bonn (Figure 11.2), the goddesses, the *matronae Aufaniae*, are displayed on the top register, but one is also depicted on the lower level doing a gesture of acceptance while the sacrificer, on the left, is probably offering wine and incense on the altar; a small assistant is holding open a box of incense (*acerra*). These scenes with men seem to focus on the libation, most often excluding animals. Viewers should not conclude that there was less animal sacrifice in rituals in Gaul and Germany, or that their rituals were dramatically different from those in Rome; animal sacrifices are in fact very well attested by archaeology. On images, however, the emphasis is on the hierarchy between gods and human beings. Moreover, men are sometimes excluded, leaving divinities with the libation bowl or the incense in the right hand as if they were about to offer the libation to themselves; but they are to be imitated. The actual sacrificial ritual is performed around the image (see Huet 2008).

To conclude, images are not merely illustrations of sacrifices, of religion and of ideology; they partly constitute them. And they help to visualize and encapsulate rituals. They are

memories and reminders. Repetition is as important in rituals as in images: although signs and gestures are constantly repeated, they are never exactly the same. Redundancy is not a problem: one can offer a sacrifice on a sacrificial altar that displays an image of sacrifice; one can reproduce by *mimesis* some of the ritual gestures. One can directly watch a ritual or one of its images. As Jaś Elsner implies (1998: 206), at Rome, image is religion, is rite.

If we compare Roman images with images coming from archaic and classical Greece, we can discern public sacrificial rituals on vase paintings in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE and private ones later on votive reliefs. Of course, the given choices of the ritual are different, though they also display hierarchies between gods, human beings and animals (see Durand 1986; Van Straten 1995). For instance, on votive reliefs, gods and goddesses are marked as being much taller than the devotees and they are usually separated by the altar. However, they do not seem to play the same crucial role in the watching of rituals as in Rome.

Watching as Initiates

"One of the characteristic devices of the non-traditional religions of the Greco-Roman world was secrecy. Reticence was not merely a means of self-protection: it was an essential part of their appeal," wrote Richard Gordon (1988: 45; see also Gordon 1979) at the beginning of his striking article on the mysteries of Mithras. He highlights the "bricolage" of this religion, of its supposed origin, of its images. Its effective strangeness, its otherness, plays with the knowledge, the practice and the watching of traditional civic religion and rituals. Its members, frequently recruited from the Roman army, were on the one hand practicing and watching traditional rituals and on the other hand gathering as initiates in a natural or built-up cave. There were seven diverse grades, that is to say, stages in the initiation, in the knowledge, but maybe not in the watching. The cult image was to display the myth of Mithras killing the bull by stabbing it in the neck with a knife and of Mithras dining on it (and literally on it, on the bull skin) with Sol; members were gathering and eating on benches built in the room that housed the image. Archaeological evidence gives us the numbers of bones of other animals such as chicken being eaten by the congregation (see Chapter 13). Thus the killing of the bull by Mithras competed with those sacrificial images that have been discussed above (cf. Huet 2009). For Mithras, the image and the myth are deliberately ambiguous, between sacrifice and hunting. As such they cannot be literally reproduced by the human practitioners. Thus, actual rituals and gestures were necessarily different from what members of the group could see on images. One should also notice that the use of a closed space was part of the appealing contrast with Roman traditional rituals. It created notions of inside and outside, of belonging or exclusion. Watching was no more a given choice: either you watched or you did not because you could not.

Elsner argues that "in essence, the imagery of official Roman religion has a literal and imitative relationship with its subject-matter and with religious practice, whereas the images of a mystery cult (such as Mithraism or pre-Constantinian Christianity) have a symbolic or exegetic relationship with what they represent" (1995: 190; see also 1998).

In fact, early Christianity functioned like a mystery cult as only initiates could get a glimpse of rituals, could hear prayers, could watch and maybe understand and learn the lessons given by and through images. It was a scriptural religion based on a sacred book, which was commented upon. Moreover, it demanded to exclude all the other gods, all the watching of the other rituals. So watching as a Christian was also about rejecting the watching of Roman rituals done in open spaces.

Not Watching Rituals: Consequences

Performing rituals behind closed doors had consequences. It suggested to outsiders that anything could happen in the secluded space; it implied too that the Roman social hierarchy could be turned upside down. Not being able to watch rituals meant that there was something to hide, something potentially dangerous for the outsiders, for Roman citizens and Rome. Not watching rituals resulted in rumors, fulfilled imagination, threatened Rome at its core. Not watching rituals helped also in inventing stories, stories of women leading rituals, of adulterous behaviors between *matronae* and slaves or between Roman citizen and women slaves. The incident of the *Bacchanalia* in 186 BCE is to some extent about a watcher who confesses to someone who tells and warns the senate; the reaction of the senate is violent against the worshippers and their associations, but not against Dionysos and his official *sacra*; it is violent because Roman social hierarchy is at stake. Later, Christian initiates are accused of vice, vicious attitudes and vicious rituals: are they not performing behind closed doors rituals where free children are sacrificed, killed, maybe even eaten? Why cannot they be seen at normal rituals that are held outside? Tellingly, similar accusations are made against Pagans when they have to perform secretly their rituals at the time when Christianity is the official and exclusive religion. Being able to watch is also about trust and control.

Guide to Further Reading

About viewing ancient ritual on pieces of art Gordon (1979, 1988, 1990) and Elsner (1995: 1–14, 190–245; 1998: 11–14, 199–235) and Scheid (1998) are crucial. For the visibility of religion and the audience, active and passive agents see Beard, North, and Price (1998: 1, 245–312); Rüpke (2012: 24–34) and Scheid (2013). See Scheid (2005) on the role of sacrifice in Roman religion. The topic of inside and outside is dealt with by Assmann (1994) and Volokhine (2008).

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CHAPTER 12

Killing and Preparing Animals

Patrice Méniel

Introduction

Animals were involved in many ritual practices throughout the Roman Empire, and this involvement already had deep roots in the provinces before their Romanization. In Gaul, before the conquest, animals provided numerous services and products, but were also present in religious practices, both funerary and sacrificial, in various contexts as nécropoleis, sanctuaries and habitats. This fact requires the development of an analysis grid independent of the context.

The archeology of sacrifice enjoys favorable archaeological conditions, especially in the field of funerary practices, because of the very privileged burial conditions when compared to those of food remains buried in dumping grounds in habitats. Due to this care given to the bones of sacrificed animals at various times, their deposit becomes of major interest because it ensured fossilizing the last gestures of the sacrificial sequence. The other benefit of animal bones is that they are part of a perfectly defined anatomical structure, which represents a starting point to reconstruct this sequence. One thus has two points of reference, compelling phases, and information about the intermediate steps which, since they are fairly precise, limit the field of assumptions and allow an insight into the sequences to be gained. Still, these ideal conditions are rarely met, which severely limits the number of sites where the approach can be applied to its full extent. First it is necessary that the sequence of sacrifice ended with the burial of the bones, which is not always the case. Second, one needs favorable conservation conditions, proper excavation and accurate recording of the remains.

Among the western provinces of the empire, in Gaul, the first sanctuaries where one finds the remains of sacrificed animals are dated to the third century BCE, and the latest such sacrificial practices date from Late Antiquity. In this vast region and during this long period of eight centuries, the sacrificial practices are diverse and it is not possible to define a standardized sacrifice.

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In the western provinces of the ancient world, the cult places also present very diverse forms. Apart from an intrinsic evolution, there is no shortage of exterior influences on localization, architectural forms and nature of the sanctuaries. These changes have important consequences for the sacrificial practices themselves. There is an entire range of practices that is gradually revealed by archeology between the first small rural sanctuaries of the third century BCE, where certain sacrifices are followed by banquets, and the large urban sanctuaries from the beginning of our era, where cattle butchery features an industrial dimension.

Lacking texts and iconographic data, the analysis of sacrificial practices relies on the bones of animals, facilities or tools and utensils. The bones are sometimes found in abundance, and have led to the development of an archeology of sacrifice endeavoring to define its possibilities and limitations. One of the basic ideas of the approach lies in the fact that the identification of a bone discloses the identity of the victim. This animal, a victim offered in a sacrifice, represents the initial stage of the practice which one is trying to reconstruct. Hence a two-way approach to the bones of the animal and to the deposit of animal remains; this allows reconstructing some material aspects of the sacrificial processing, which can be ordered in the direction of an increasing dislocation of carcasses.

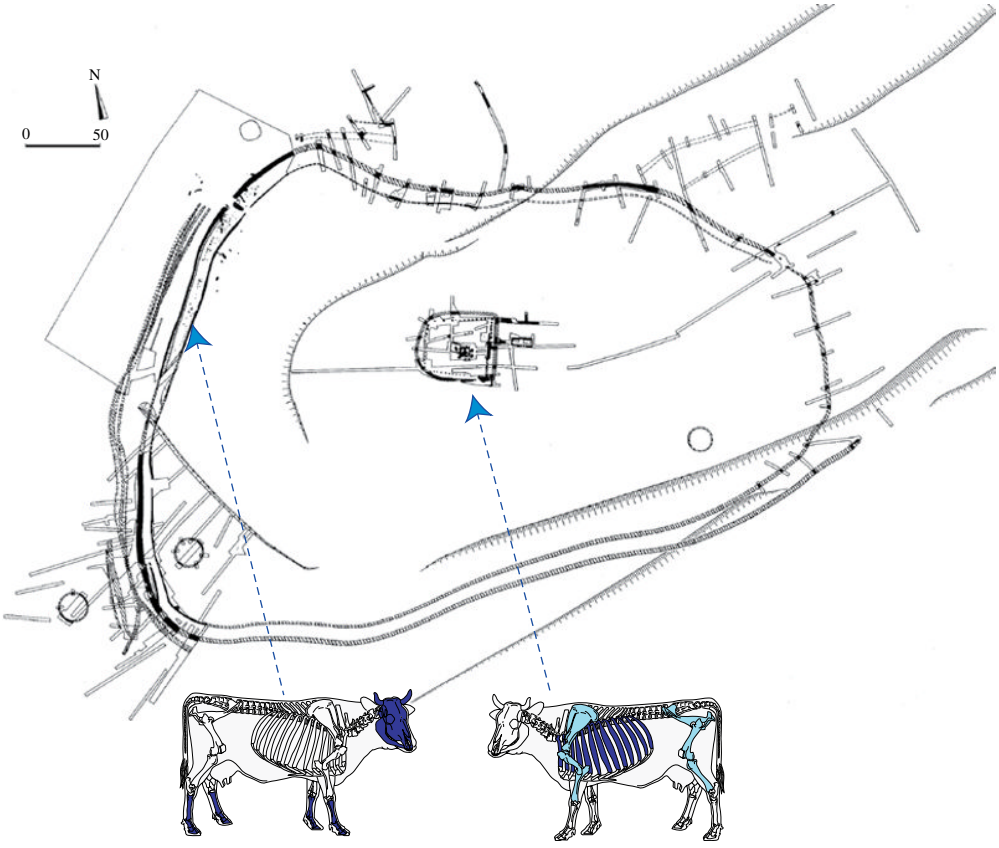

Figure 12.1 Location of the two kinds of bovine deposits on the shrine of Fesques (Seine Maritime, France). CAD by E. Mantel and P. Meniel.

This possibility of reconstruction will guide the first part this chapter. In a second step, I will take into account the find contexts and their contribution to the interpretation of gestures.

Choosing the Victims

The bones found during archaeological excavations inform first about the animals. They provide the identity of the animals and information about their morphology, age, sex and pathology. Currently, the results of isotopic analyses can supply information regarding their geographical origin, while DNA is used to specify the color of the coat of some animals, such as the horses from Mormont (Nuviala 2014). All these allow some of the criteria employed in the selection of sacrificed animals to be determined.

An estimate of the number of sacrificed animals is more difficult. In fact, in order to count the animals killed at the same ceremony, it is necessary to clarify whether their bones were deposited simultaneously, or whether one is dealing with the presence of accumulations of remains from successive ceremonies. This sometimes requires particular circumstances, both in the ancient period and during the archaeological excavation. Some examples are offered by deposits from the early first century BCE found in pits from a Gallic village in Acy-Romance, where fifty sheep were sacrificed at the same time. Further, in the space of the sanctuary from Vertault, up to ten horses and eleven dogs were sacrificed at one time at the beginning of the first century of our era. At Gournay-sur-Aronde, in the third century BCE, ten oxen were put to death at four times consecutively. In most cases, the abundance of bones, by hundred thousands, indicates mass killings, but the minimum number of animals corresponding to the length of the chronological phases actually remains reduced (180 oxen in 20 years, so 9 oxen per year in Titelberg in the Augustus–Tiberius time!). This is partly due to the impossibility of estimating the number of victims when only scattered bones are available; it is, of course, a different case when one finds skeletons or parts of animal bodies, as at Vertault.

In Gaul, the choice of animals fell heavily on domestic species, especially mammals. It is fairly unusual for a single species to be represented in a sacrificial deposit, but the predominance of a species can be often observed. Other particular features can result from the choice of a class of subjects, a particular age or sex group. Thus, deposits may be composed solely of male animals (the horses and dogs in Vertault; Jouin and Méniel 2001) or of very elderly subjects (the cattle in Gournay-sur-Aronde, and in Saint-Just-en-Chaussée) or, on the contrary, of quite young subjects. This is the case of the two-year-old cattle sacrificed in the sanctuaries from Fesques (Mantel 1997), Titelberg (Metzler, Méniel, and Gaeng 2006) or Imphy (Stephenson 2009).

The age and sex of the victims allow distinguishing categories according to their use as living animals, respectively as beef cattle, dairy cattle or pack animals, but also determine the nature of their sacrifice, and whether the sacrifice was followed by the eating of meat or not.

The origin of animals and the manner of acquisition (livestock? spoils of war?) will shape certain aspects of the sacrificial rituals, but it is difficult to specify all these aspects. The procedures for the acquisition will influence certain aspects of practice, procession or market, for example, as well as the relationship between ritual requirements and economic constraints.

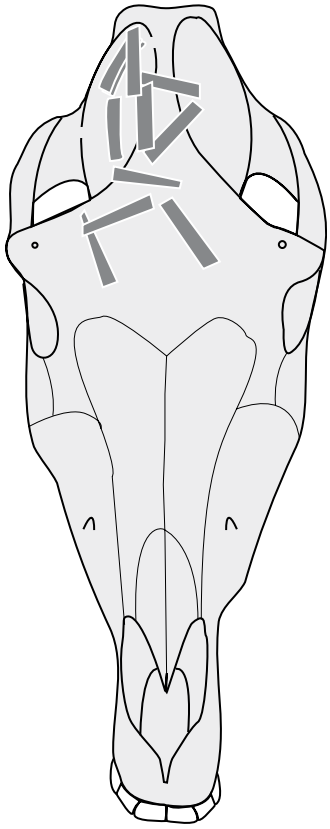

Figure 12.2 The traces of killing (cut marks) observed on eleven horse skulls from the shrine of Vertault (Côte d'Or, France). CAD by P. Méniel.

Acquisition and Holding of Animals

A largely overlooked aspect concerns the manner of acquisition, gathering and driving the animals before the sacrifice. This aspect is obviously related to the number of slaughtered animals, which is difficult to determine, as already pointed out. There should be sufficient sources of supply, and facilities likely to accommodate the animals before killing, such as fenced plots or halls. Here, too, the circumstances are quite different in protohistoric rural sanctuaries and the urban sanctuaries of the beginning of antiquity, which raises the questions of market, slaughter and distribution of meat in the city. Within the first, the number of subjects is clearly smaller and the constraints more severe, especially because the animals are primarily pigs, sheep and goats, all of small size at the time, and they are often quite young or even very young, such as the few-months-old lambs in Gournay-sur-Aronde. Small enclosures like the ones in Corent may then be sufficient (Poux and Foucras 2008).

Things are very different in the large ancient sanctuaries, where the sacrifice primarily concerns cattle. By this time, these animals have an increased body size, which is not without consequences for their holding and stalling. This is probably what explains the occurrence of specific facilities in the form of halls, barns, or alignments of postholes quite similar to our most recent rural markets. Traces of such a facility

at the beginning of the first century BCE were found in the public space of the oppidum in Titelberg.

In fact, gatherings of such large animals are not possible in the small enclosures of some of the sanctuaries of the second Iron Age (up to 15m side length in Bennecourt in the Yvelines), since these spaces are occupied by various facilities, pits, trophies, or other things. This leaves little space for the movement of large animals, which probably explains why most of these sanctuaries, which have been already been the subject of extended investigations, are included in much larger enclosures, such as in Nanteuil-sur-Aisne (Ardennes), Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Somme), Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise) or in Fesques (Seine Maritime). On the latter site, the ditch of the large exterior enclosure, which encompasses ten hectares, was used for depositing the heads and legs of hundreds of cattle, all of them two years old, over an undetermined period of time. The presence of these deposited remains suggests mass slaughters in a vast space where a cattle market and a number of operations for processing cattle carcasses may take place, while the victims were undoubtedly sacrificed in the center of the sanctuary located in the middle of this large enclosure during the second century BCE.

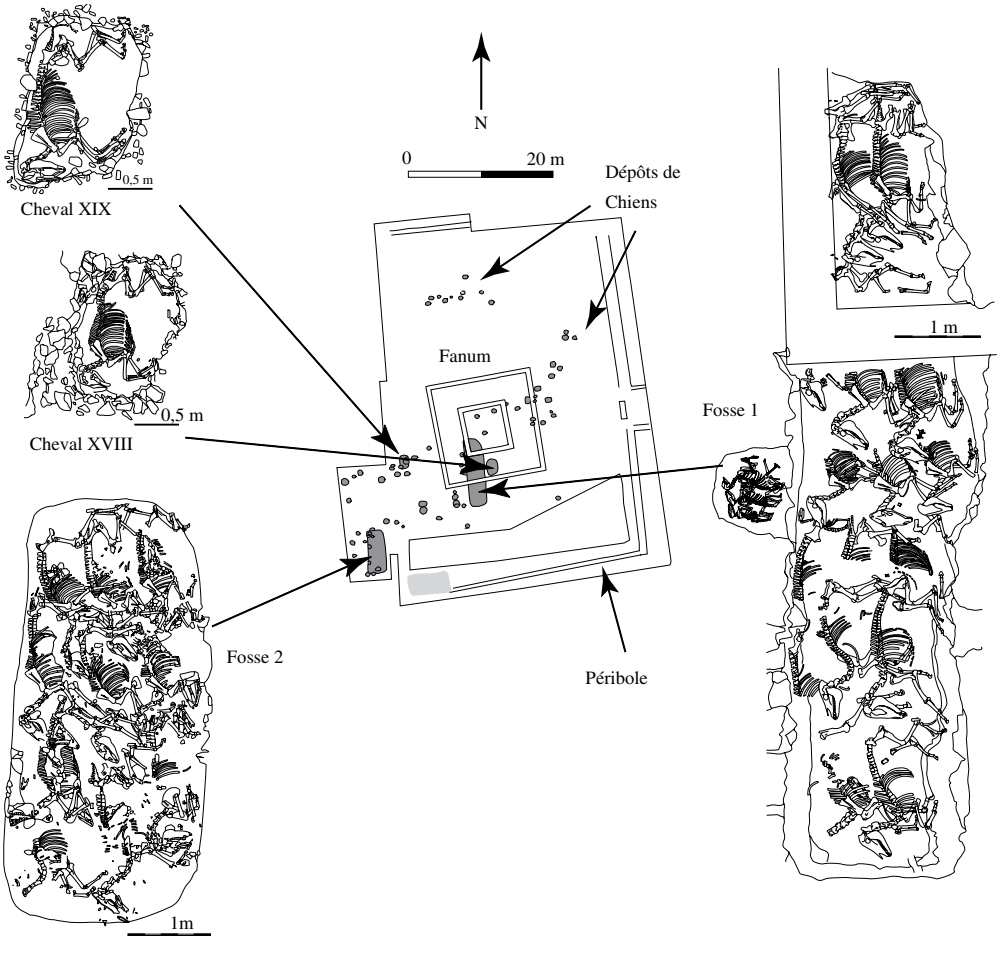

Figure 12.3 The four horse deposits from the shrine of Vertault (Côte d'Or, France). CAD by P. Méniel.

The Killing and Butchering

The causes of an animal's death are often undetectable on its skeleton. This is due to the diversity of possible ways to kill an animal without marking the bones—first and foremost bleeding the animal, but also choking, strangulation or other ways—but also to the possible loss of eventual traces of the impact on bones, particularly after butchering. This explains the fact that the dramatic impact of hatchets preserved on the cattle skulls from the sanctuary of Gournay-sur-Aronde and on skulls of horses in Vertault represents an exception. The former are particularly striking because of their extremely precise localization on all the cattle skulls (only one out of twenty is unharmed) in the form of a section corresponding to the ax found in the ditch not far from the deposits of bones. The localization of this impact implies an animal slaughtered with the head lowered and close to the ground. One should undoubtedly imagine here a restraint device (ring?), which has not been found. The asymmetry of the section, which presents a larger side to the right, indicates that the sacrificer stood on the left of the animal. The regularity of the cut shows the skills of the person performing the cut. It is tempting to establish similarities with what is displayed in the ancient iconography of the Mediterranean world.

In Vertault, the cuts of the ax identified on horse skulls are also extremely precise, but do not have the same implications for the corresponding positions of the victim and sacrificer. One must imagine here a standing, most probably blindfolded, horse; otherwise the operation would have been impossible.

In other sanctuaries, the methods of killing often remain indeterminate, but the marks produced by passing a knife on the cervical vertebrae may sometimes indicate bleeding the animal.

The animals sacrificed in sanctuaries may be distinguished according to whether or not their meat was to be consumed. This crucial distinction is informed primarily by the butchery marks and the state of the bones. The boundary may act at the species level, and this is why the horse does not appear among the remains of banquets. The boundary may act also with regard to the categories of animals, separating among sacrificed cattle the young or in-growth animals from the animals butchered at a more-or-less advanced age. On the other side, pigs, sheep and goats are usually consumed at banquets, while the fate of dogs changes between the protohistory, when they are consumed at banquets, and the ancient period, when this is no longer the case.

The butchery and cooking of the animals which were consumed after sacrifice do not show significant differences from the practices of profane cuisine as attested by the culinary remains collected in habitats. Not everything was consumed, of course. There is butchering waste, and regularly there are parts missing in the deposits containing remains from banquets, suggesting that some pieces of meat had, for example, a particular destination, or they were consumed elsewhere, or they were destroyed by fire. The choice of pieces of meat consumed on the spot at banquets fell on tasty morsels, but the preferences are not the same everywhere. These preferences are reflected in the choice of certain species, pork or lamb, or in the chosen parts of the animal body, shoulder, joint or ribs. These gastronomic preferences are sometimes supplemented by rules that will favor one side or the other of the body, as the right shoulder of sheep in a series of bones deposits on the island of Ouessant (France, Finistère, Bronze Age to ancient times; Le Bihan et al. 2007), in Gournay-sur-Aronde (third century BCE) or in Harlow (first century of our era,

Great Britain, Essex; Legge and Dorrington 1985; Legge et al. 2000), but also the bone of the right joint, as in Gravelle, where they were burnt (France, Pas de Calais; Lepetz and Van Andringa 2008b).

Not just the meat of domestic mammals was consumed during the banquets, but also poultry, game, fish or shellfish. The remains of these animals are usually found in very small amounts in the deposits piled up in ditches or in pits of Gallic sanctuaries. It is obvious that some of these animals cannot be the object of a bloody sacrifice, and that their presence reflects the acquisition of additional food in order to make these banquets more agreeable. The proportion of poultry significantly increases by the beginning of the ancient period, especially in Bennecourt (Yvelines), and shellfish tends to occupy a considerable place in some coastal or island sites such as Ouessant, but it is impossible to specify if this consumption choice is due to the fact that some participants may not have the means to offer a domestic mammal for sacrifice, or whether it reflects a desire to bring some variety to the dishes consumed at banquets.

The situation is quite different in the large urban sanctuaries of the ancient cities. In addition to the now massive presence of cattle, the deposits have very different assemblages along and there is a huge amount of butchery waste, which has also changed its nature: legs, series of vertebrae, scapula or mandibles. On the other hand, the bones of edible parts are far less well represented than the waste resulting from butchery, which is practiced now on an unprecedented scale. In the sanctuaries integrated into the urban setting, sometimes at a very early point as in case of the oppidum from Titelberg, what is missing in the deposits of bones from the sanctuary is found in the household waste: this complementarity allows to follow the course of the sacrificial meat in some ancient cities like Lutèce (France, Paris; Oueslati 2006) or Jouars-Pontchartrain (France, Yvelines; Lepetz and Van Andringa 2008b).

Things seem to be very different in isolated sanctuaries such as the one of Mercury on the top of Puy de Dôme (France, second century CE, unpublished), where the remains of pigs, especially joint bones and legs, were deposited in a pit commonly referred to as a *favissa*; in fact, it concealed a rich material, including coins, bronze statuettes, an eye from a statue…, which is certainly not trivial waste. It seems that here one has the remains of banquets that follow in a direct line from those of the Iron Age, with no trace of a mass slaughter of cattle; this animal is particularly scarce in this important sanctuary.

The Deposits Containing Bones: Display, Deposits or Waste Recipients?

The bones of sacrificed animals were discarded within the enclosure of sanctuaries or in the ditches that outlined these enclosures. In fact, it seems that some of them were never meant to leave the sacred enclosure.

The remains of animals that were not consumed in the sanctuaries of the Iron Age, respectively horses or old oxen, are represented by body parts or bones resulting from the dislocation of decomposed corpses, which are little fragmented and without butchery traces. In fact, these animals have not been buried, which would have resulted in complete and articulated skeletons. These are the remains of carcasses moved while in a state of partial to advanced decomposition by the time of burial. This movement resulted in

more-or-less important losses of bones of small dimensions, which were forgotten on the location of the decomposition, as in the case of the large central pit in Gournay-sur-Aronde or in Ribemont-sur-Ancre, near the ditch. These body parts are clearly very different from those from banquets, and are part of often very spectacular deposits from the ditches of the enclosure, where they sometimes remained exposed to the weather for a long time, perfectly visible to everybody, before being buried. This phase of display has as a consequence a quite characteristic alteration of the bone surface, which sometimes develops over years, even decades. In other cases, the burial takes place sooner, after a few weeks or a few months, at a moment when the body loses its original appearance, just before the beginning of the dislocation of the joints. This phase, especially well noted in Vertault at the beginning of our era, left time for dogs and other scavengers to act on the viscera and to empty abdomens. Within this site, more than 200 male dogs were buried alone, in pairs or triples, sometimes more, lying on their left side, with the heads to the west, in 80 pits. These animals were not consumed, which reflects a profound change in their status at the beginning of our era.

The spectacular finds from Gallic sanctuaries, such as the complete skulls of animals which were not consumed, respectively oxen and horses in Gournay-sur-Aronde or Saint-Just-en-Chaussée (Méniel 2001), but also carnivores as in Corent (Poux 2006; Poux and Foucras 2008), may have been displayed before being buried in the ditches of the enclosures of these cult places. The accumulation of other findings, although less emblematic than the skulls, sometimes denotes an undeniable symbolic dimension, although from a strictly material point of view this is first of all butchery waste. Examples include the garlands of sheep mandibles hanging on the walls in Corent (Poux and Foucras 2008), a deposit of mandibles of two-year-old oxen from Imphy (France, Nièvre; Stephenson 2009) or the spectacular accumulation of cattle scapula in Frauenberg (Austria; Tiefengraber and Grill 2007).

The residue from banquets is usually much less spectacular, because it is mostly a case of broken and scattered bones even if they provide sometimes quite substantial assemblages. In the sanctuary of Fesques (Mantel 1997), where the remains, heads and legs of several hundreds of two-year-old cattle were piled in the ditch of the large exterior enclosure, just some sections of ribs lost in the majority of remains of pigs and sheep were collected among the rests of banquets deposited in the ditch of the small center enclosure on the summit of the plateau. The use of the body remains, that here were associated with the heads and legs of cattle, often appears in the negative in the deposits from banquets, especially through the absence of leg bones. But there are also other bones missing, particularly the vertebrae and of members or heads. This fact does not allow restoring whole carcasses and points out an obvious selection. This observation applies to the oldest deposits in Gallic sanctuaries, but also to those of the Roman period such as the one of Mercury on the top of Puy de Dôme. Here the deposit already mentioned is largely dominated by joint bones, without any knowledge of what became of the other parts of the pigs, except for a few bones which are not from the joints that have been brought there.

In the case of these rural, Gallic or Gallo-Roman sanctuaries, nothing is known of the fate of the missing body parts, in contrast to urban sanctuaries where there are some clues regarding the situation in.

The nature of deposits of bones found in sanctuaries completely change during the impressive transformations that accompany Romanization. The bones are still found in

large numbers in the oldest of the sanctuaries where the earth floors offer the possibility of burying bones in place. However, the context becomes completely different as a consequence of architectural changes at the beginning of our era: the use of stone and paved flooring obviously reduces the potential for disposal of remains in situ. Regardless of these considerations, there are also other questions to be raised about the nature of the practice that was taking place in sanctuaries, and about the status of bones which are still buried or used as in-filling. Inventories reveal an increase of bones from the primary butchery of animals, such as leg bones, spine parts, mandibles or scapula. These remains may be considered from a material point of view as waste from early stages of butchery and deboning, and it is difficult to determine whether some of them, such as the mandibles, could still have been of a value as trophies.

Relations to the Profane World

The sacrificed animals are selected from the livestock of the community or come from elsewhere, as spoils of war, for example. Regardless of their provenance, the animals originate from the profane world, and there is the premise that by being killed they acquire the sacred character which makes them suitable to be offered to the deities. Both meat and sacrificial rests have this status, which may explain their special treatment for consumption at a banquet, or preservation of the bones in the sacred enclosures. But the opening of the assemblages which show that certain bones are missing from body parts requires considering the possibility of a return of a part of the meat into the profane world. These relations between sacred and profane open the discussion of the relations between religious rules, such as the choice of the portions on the right side of bodies in Ouessant, and economic realities. This allows a link to be established between the nature of animals, juveniles, animals for butchery or animals for culling, and the sacrifices, whether they are followed by meat consumption or not. The archaeological, in essence materialist, approach is obviously not foreign to this economic reading of sacrificial practices.

The criteria for selection of animals, first and foremost species, age and sex, are likely to be prescribed, as is the case with the offering of male animals to male gods or female animals to female deities. There are, however, also strong factors determining the food value of the animals, with a fundamental distinction between animals for butchery and animals for culling. It turns out that this duality determines the nature of sacrificial practices of the Gauls, resulting in two broad categories of sacrifices: those of young animals followed by banquets and those of elderly animals, whose meat is not consumed. From a strictly material point of view, the sacrifice appears as a form of religious valorization of animals according to their origin, their physical condition or rendered benefits. In fact, the end of the Iron Age and the beginning of the Roman period are marked by the arrival of large animals in the western part of the Empire. These large animals, horses and oxen, first present in small numbers, see their rate increased significantly at the beginning of the imperial period. Up to now, we have not observed the exclusive sacrifice of large animals, but mostly the sacrifice of small animals of local origin, sometimes together with large animals. The oldest case known is that of Gournay-sur-Aronde, where some remains of a large horse were found among the remains of six small horses and forty small oxen.

Another case is that of the remains of two great oxen in the large pit in Vertault, where otherwise thirty small horses were deposited at the beginning of our era. In Titelberg, the number of large cattle found in the structures near the sanctuary is no different from that found elsewhere on the site, and therefore it is not possible to highlight a particular choice at this stage.

This materialist reading should be supplemented by some nuanced considerations, particularly regarding the status acquired by animals kept beyond their period of growth for a use: to ride, for milking or for company. During this period of time, the proximity of human beings favors personal ties and confers a special status beyond the anonymity that can characterize the livestock intended for meat production. Thus, the saddle horse or plow-oxen acquire a status that can make them inedible. It is clear that these prestige animals, sacrificed without being eaten, are much less numerous than the others, for which the consumption and distribution of meat usually follow after the ritualized killing. These animals, essentially pigs, sheep and goats, are then subject to the same modalities of choice often identical to management rules in force in contemporary habitats. Even the apparent anomaly of slaughtering a few-months-old lamb is actually a way of appropriating the milk production of females; these remains are present in some sanctuaries where the sacrificial remains were beyond the reach of teeth of carnivores, which would have made them disappear.

In the diachronic perspective outlined in these pages, the respective shares of meat consumed in sanctuaries at banquets and meat that is consumed elsewhere are also evolving in a way that gradually reduces urban sanctuaries to places of ritualistic slaughter, where the rests of banquets fade in favor of profit of the rests of large-scale butchery. This butchery is followed by a distribution of meat in the city. This relation, sometimes confirmed by complementarities between deposits of bones buried near sanctuaries and those from dumping grounds of habitats, only confirms a deep dynamic of religious practices and their interweaving with the economic realities of the meat market.

In the same vein, in Gallic sanctuaries at the beginning of our era, the fate of animals that were not consumed but subjected to display and then burial respecting the rules of alignment and orientation or to offerings, evolved in a quite spectacular manner during the Roman period. Indeed, these forms of ritual deposits disappear then, when the first carcass disposals at the gates of some cities appear, as in the case of Chalons-en-Champagne or Mâcon (Lepetz, Rivière, and Frère 2013). This new form of treatment of animals for culling marks the end of an entire category of sacrificial practices.

Guide to Further Reading

Publications about sanctuaries where the remains of animal sacrifices were discovered cover Bennecourt (Bourgeois 1999), Gournay-sur-Aronde (Brunaux, Méniel, and Poplin 1985), Fesques (Mantel 1997), Corent (Poux and Foucras 2008) or Vertault (Jouin and Méniel 2001). Methodological aspects of the study of the rests of sacrifices are addressed by Méniel (2008) and there are collections of articles and synthesis studies for the ancient period (Lepetz and Van Andringa 2008a; Van Andringa 2007).

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CHAPTER 13

Communal Dining: Making Things Happen

Marleen Martens

Introduction

This chapter deals with communal dining as an essential element in the ritual repertory of Roman religion. Over the past decades the sources for sacrificial meals with a communal character, prominently present in the ancient cultures of northwestern Europe, the Mediterranean area, and western Asia, have increasingly been explored by varying academic disciplines. As archaeological methodology has moved forward, the remains of feasts have been increasingly identified in archaeological contexts. The scope of the chapter is the whole Mediterranean area including distant territories of (later) Roman provinces from the archaic period down to late antiquity. One cannot discuss Roman practices in these regions divorced from the long and complex traditions behind them. From a number of different perspectives the chapter explores the multiple layers of information, which can be discerned from material culture encountered in different cultural contexts to gain more knowledge on the motivations, practices and experiences of the people engaged in communal dining in a religious context.

This chapter discusses how to identify material culture as remains of dining practices and how to infer which practices took place and which shared experiences were accomplished by participating in religious feasts. Since feasting is a significant feature in many cultures it is worthwhile to first briefly examine this social phenomenon from an anthropological perspective, inquiring about common motivations and experiences. Furthermore, it is interesting to reflect on what constitutes the religious dimension of communal dining and makes it different from daily meals, materially as well as experientially. Essential for understanding the subject and its importance in Roman society is to elaborate on the role of ritual and feasting for the creation of the material culture of the "Roman world" and the formation of a common identity of local communities through the "material" demands of these events and the experiences shared. The Roman small town of Tienen (Belgium) will serve as a case study.

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Figure 13.1 Bronze plaque carrying the inscription: D(eo) I(nvicto) M(ithrae) | Tullio Spuri (f. or s.) | vslm. Translation: To the invincible god Mithras, Tullio (son or slave of) Spurius has gladly fulfilled his pledge with good cause (from the mithraeum in Tienen). Photo by Marleen Martens.

Unity in Diversity: An Anthropological Perspective

Long before the Roman period, meals had become familiar expressions of common identity, social unity and communal celebration in areas that later became part of the Roman Empire. Since the practice has such a long tradition in these areas, as in the Roman core area itself, it cannot be considered from an exclusively "Roman" perspective. We would prefer to see "Roman feasts" as dynamic and variable events. Each specific case has singular properties. Feasting, however, also can be seen as a cultural universal and has been described by anthropologists as unique human behavior (Hayden and Villeneuve 2011). The system of communal dining may have originated in favored locations during the Upper Palaeolithic period; however, it appears to have become more widespread only during Mesolithic and subsequent food-producing periods (Hayden 1996). Also in later periods, to this day, centrality of the feast in human gatherings extends far beyond special occasions and the marking of important life events.

During the past decades, archaeologists and ethnographers have proposed various reasons and motivations for feasting. Archaeologists have used ancient sources, ethnographic and ethno-archaeological analogy to bridge the conceptual gap that lies between the material remains of the past and the intentions and actions of humans who created them (Wright 2004; Dietler and Hayden 2010). At their most obvious, feasts serve to provision guests and to celebrate collective or commemorate special events. Feasts, however, also play much more subtle socio-cultural roles. There is widespread agreement that feasts serve to establish social relationships, identities and memories, exchange information, create political power and inequalities in gender identities, accomplish work and develop prestige technologies in agriculture and craft (Hayden and Villeneuve 2011). Moreover, in many ancient cultures the main way to honor the gods or goddesses was to make offerings of food or animal sacrifices. In the majority of cases this included the accompanying meal of the worshipers (Harland 2009). One of the most common attributes

Figure 13.2 Lion in clay (from mithraeum in Tienen). Photo by Marleen Martens.

of feasting, the consumption of lavish quantities of food or drink (Clarke 2010; Dietler 2010a; Hayden 1996) can affect the archaeological record in a considerable way. Specific sets of material signatures allow to identify past feasting practices and have been developed recently for sites at very distant places and periods (Twiss 2008; Dabney, Halstead, and Thomas 2004; Martens 2012). However, they are similar and interchangeable due to the common material demands of feasts and apparently also common deposition practices. Utensils for transport and storage, for preparation, serving and consumption of food and drink as well as (sacrificed and consumed) animal remains are to be expected everywhere.

In the Roman world, though remarkably few archaeological deposits have been identified as the remains of feasts, we can assume that the material culture used for feasting can show many resemblances, depending on the area and its geopolitical situation, due to the use of the same or similar artifacts such as *amphorae* for wine and oil and luxury tableware. The feasting gear and practices that existed prior to Roman influence were transformed. The speed and the degree of transformation of deeply rooted religious practices, like communal dining, depended on the receptivity of the local communities confronted with new forms of material culture, ideas and practices and their need, willingness and flexibility towards change.

Divine Presence? Divine Intervention

Communal meals in a Roman period religious context are occasions consciously distinguished from everyday meals because of the general concept for divine or supernatural interference with life on earth or life after death in all its possible aspects. Rather than introducing a dichotomous classification between daily meals with family members and friends on the one hand, and communal meals on the other, however, we would

rather speak of different levels of religious dimensions of meals. To establish degrees of differences with quotidian meals is important for the construction of an interpretative framework. One of the distinctions is situated on the experiential level. Here, participants of feasts are drawn into a world of food symbolism that extends far beyond the daily meals (Douglas 1975). When considering the motivations of the organizers and participants of feasts, known from the diverse sources, there is a large variation in communal meals depending on the occasion and the cultic contexts: vows, sacrifices, initiations, acts of periodic worship, seasonal festivals, commemorations of dead ancestors and funerals. Religious feasts can be organized within families, associations or guilds, cult communities and for larger crowds. As for the intentions, feasts signal common social and religious interests of the organizer(s) and the participants to endeavor to communicate with the supernatural by sharing food one way or the other with each other and with the gods. There is some variation in the religious traditions concerning the degree in which the gods were actually participating in the meals or the food was actually shared. Sometimes, as was the case in some Greek ritual meals, the gods were "present" in the form of statues, seated at the table or at another location of the feast (Rüpke 2005), but did not actually gather with the humans in a banquet, as Rüpke argues rightly against the commensality of gods and humans. In some specific Egyptian feasts, as in the known "Sarapis banquet," however, the gods even symbolically invited the participants (Osiris) to the banquet (Smith 2003). In other cases, as was often the case in Roman contexts, the gods were invited to participate by means of offerings like incense, meat or other foodstuff or goods (Scheid 2005). The religious communication between the participants of the feasts and the gods, however, may take different expressions depending on the efforts of the organizers and participants of the events. These efforts could be translated materially in the sacrifices, decoration of the location, the menu and quality of the meal, the table service, the *paraphernalia* and the dress and jewels of the attendees, and immaterially in the form of vows, prayers, songs, dances, other performances and processions. The difference between ritual meals and daily routine meals, indeed, was emphasized by differences in practice and the material culture used. The place of enactment can contribute to the religious aspect of a meal when it is celebrated in a building (house, temple complex, collegium building) or open space (near source, in a forest, in open air sanctuary) that is used for cultic purposes or has a special significance, thus reinforcing its religious character. Depending on the feast or the cultural context, only men or only women or both could be present and a strict social hierarchy among the groups who were to dine together could be intentionally emphasized by the location of their places. Religious rules were formulated locally and situationally and followed strictly; purity of the diners could be essential with washing of hands as a minimum and the use of perfumed oils, special clothing and jewelry or the absence of it could be prescribed. As such, ritual meals and the events surrounding them can be considered as complex happenings composed of practices and material culture of which the meaning is symbolical and dependent on the concrete context.

To understand the extent of this complexity, descriptions of, or at least norms for, Roman banqueting rituals are invaluable because of the richness of concrete data. A revealing example is the *lex collegii* of the *cultores Dianae et Antinoi* from Lavinium (136 CE), many of whose rules directly address banqueting on festal occasions. Here, we find that festal requirements are carefully detailed. For example, each supervising magister

Figure 13.3 Black-slipped beaker with barbotine decoration and the inscription "Propino tibi" (I drink to your health) (from mithraeum in Tienen). Photo by Marleen Martens.

was required to provide "good wine," bread worth two asses for all members, sardines, a single place setting, and warm water and utensils. Such specificity confirms the importance of the communal meal among groups of this sort (Donahue 2005; *CIL* 14.2112 = *ILS* 7212).

The various celebrations of the annual calendars that existed in many regions of the empire offer great insight into the intersection of eating and ritual in "Roman" society. No fewer than eight festivals of the Roman religious calendar included feasts among their activities. The Saturnalia and the Compitalia offered feasts that were open to the public at large. Feasting and drinking occurred in the name of various divinities and at different places and times throughout the year (Scheid 2003; Rüpke 2012).

Building Communities, Creating and Transforming Culture: Feasting in the *vicus* of Tienen

The establishment of Roman authority brought local communities closer in touch with new religious ideas and practices than ever before (Derks 1998). The Roman transport network and removal of political boundaries allowed traders, craftsmen, settlers and soldiers to travel faster and further than at any time before, distributing ideas and material culture. The religion of local and regional communities, constituted by a complex interplay of beliefs and practices performed by individuals, is not static but can be influenced by social, economic and political changes (Georgoudi, Koch Piettre, and Schmidt 2005). Transition to the Roman Empire brought about new ways to exploit the landscape for agriculture, craft and trade and so created new social hierarchies. Processes of economic, political and social change continuously influenced the

lives of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Settlements were transformed and new types of farms, villas, nucleated settlements and towns were founded, creating an arena for identities and communities to alter. In this rapidly-changing world the importance of rituals and feasts to forge and reinforce group identities, create social constellations and reproduce communities cannot be overestimated (Henig 2005; Dietler 2010b; see Chapter 1). Through their shared experiences the participants in feasts associated events with memories, histories and stories, creating a sense of belonging and community.

It goes without saying that the choice of inclusion of certain participants could also imply the exclusion of others, in which case we can speak of segregative commensality (Donahue 2005). Next to building communities and group identities, communal feasting could also have a transformative power over existing concepts of value, taste and ideology. Recent comparative research into the composition of archaeological remains from domestic, cemetery and ritual/ceremonial contexts of the Roman small town of Tienen has shown that the material culture consumed within the context of ritual took up an important part of the total of the deposited remains in all phases of the settlement (Martens 2012), thus clearly confirming the economic impact of feasting. In the same research, the transformation of the material culture in these three different cultural contexts has been studied. It was shown that new species of animals (like dog, fowl, wild birds, horse) and new types of objects (like incense burners, *mortaria*, i.e., bowls for pounding, mixing and pouring food, and jugs with a handle and spout used for heating water) were first introduced in ritual contexts. It was also shown that the selection of animal species, the age of slaughtering and the parts of animals deposited were very different in domestic, cemetery and other ritual contexts. This research confirms that feasting, often marked by the consumption of unusual foods and material culture, also had an important impact on the material culture and practices in local communities by valorizing innovative materials, concepts, and practices (Martens 2012; Hayden 1996).

Apart from the prescribed victims for sacrifice specific for the event at hand, the organizers of the feast had a wide choice about how to prepare food and how to serve it, the quality of table service, the quality of drinks (very often wine) and how to serve it in communal bowl or individual services. These choices offered opportunities to make ritual meals different from daily routine meals. Illustrative of the mutual influence of everyday life practice and religious practice is the growing importance given to collective dining-rooms in sacred areas in Pompeii in the first century CE. This was not due to a change in religious practice, but originates in a growing need for comfort and glamour. To fulfill that need, religious communities adopted some architectural features and some decorative pattern of private houses and vice versa. This mutual influence of feasting and daily life is also noticeable in the transformation of culinary and dining practices, behaviors that are archaeologically identifiable if the remains are studied in detail (Martens 2012).

As mentioned before, remains of specific feasting events are rarely identified in Roman sites. The remains and contexts of three different feasting events discovered during recent archaeological research in the Roman small town of Tienen are briefly described to illustrate the unity and diversity of the remains of feasting in three successive centuries and their interpretation in different cultural contexts.

Feasting Remains in the Augusto-Tiberan Ceremonial Enclosure

In the Augusto-Tiberan period, probably also the time of the foundation of the *vicus*, a square ditched enclosure was laid out in the southwestern periphery of the *vicus* (Martens et al. 2002). In the northeastern corner of the enclosure a wooden post building was erected. The enclosure had an entrance, directed to the center of the *vicus*. Right and left of the entrance on the bottom of the enclosure ditch, cattle teeth were found that probably belonged to skulls deposited soon after the ditches were dug, possibly on the occasion of the inauguration of the complex. On top of this a dense layer of burnt clay, charcoal, burnt bone, a mass of ceramic debris and some small finds was deposited right and left of the entrance. The deposit was wet-sieved and finds give us a clear indication of the function of the complex. The presence of mostly imported tableware and ceramic containers seems to indicate that we are dealing with the remains of a feast. The tableware consists of Samian ware of Italo-Gaulish origin, cups in thin-walled ware from workshops at Cologne or Neuss, *terra nigra* and *terra rubra* drinking ware and jugs in local ware. The 61 fragments of Samian ware can be attributed to 18 vessels: 14 cups, 1 plate and 1 decorated bowl. The thin-walled ware consists of 145 sherds belonging to 8 cups originating from the Rhine area. The Gallo-Belgic ware consisted of 47 beakers, 5 cups, 2 bowls, 4 bottles and 5 plates. The categories of ceramic containers consist of 9 dolia (large earthenware containers) and 38 so-called "corkurnes" (handformed earthenware containers mostly with shell tempering) imported from the Ardennes-Eifel area with ready-made delicacies. Thanks to the sieving operation we have been able to collect not less than 32,862 fragments of salt containers, corresponding to an estimated minimum number of 40 individual pots. This is surprising new evidence for the distribution of salt in the Augustan period. Salt was needed in large quantities, both as a condiment and to preserve food. Among the other objects in the assemblage we have 6 fragments of La Tène bracelets and beads in glass, an intaglio in three-colored glass with traces of gold, 4 fibulae (brooches) and a palmet in bronze, a total of 10 Augustan bronze coins and a large amount of iron objects, of which some 250 fragments are of shoe nails. The fragments of the La Tène bracelets could be heirlooms, reminders of certain events in the past, since their production stopped at the end of the 1st century BCE.

The symbolical and socio-cultural importance of these items in this context cannot be underestimated. The composition of the finds assemblage shows that the consumers must have had contacts with many regions of the Roman empire: for the "corkurnes" with the *civitas* of the Treveri, for the salt with the region of the Menapii or Morini, for the fine ware cups with the region of the Ubii and for the coins, the *terra sigillata*, the sandals and the intaglio with the Roman core area. The socio-political and economic power of the organizers is also clear from their ability to coordinate such labor-intensive work in constructing the enclosure. Its position at the edge of the plateau dominating the area of the *vicus* also emphasizes its importance for the town. So we have good reasons to propose that this enclosure was a large ceremonial complex, constructed when the *vicus* was founded for the gathering of large crowds of people. The ceramics seem to have been the remains of a high-status feast. The feast involved the consumption of meals composed with refined imported products that were served in and eaten and

drunk from mainly imported crockery. The presence of the bronze palmet in the deposit, probably a part of a representative bronze vessel, presumably reflects the high ranking of some members of the community taking part in the ceremony.

As archaeologists have emphasized before, the feasting context is an ideal one in which to reaffirm or introduce new concepts, new values and to manipulate people's emotions in ways that favor the organizers' political interests. The inhabitants of the *vicus* in the Augusto-Tiberan period were certainly confronted with important socio-political and economic changes and elected for a new lifestyle within the *vicus*. It is possible that this ceremonial complex was constructed at the occasion of rituals performed to found the *vicus*. There is evidence for this kind of ceremony (taking the *auspices* and ploughing the *pomerium*) at a number of towns in Britain including Dorchester and Silchester. Although the *vicus* of Tienen was not an official town, similar rituals could have reinforced the sanctity of the settlement and reified it as an entity, conceptually divorced from and elevated above the rest of the landscape. The location of the enclosure at the outskirts of the town, on the edge of the plateau, its date and the nature of the ritual deposition would plead in favor of this interpretation. This would also be a possible explanation for the fact that the surface of this enclosure remained untouched almost three centuries after its erection and for the religious connotation that this area had during the rest of the Roman period. The enclosure would also be an expression of the idea of community that was created through this kind of public ritual in which sacrifice (as indicated by bull skulls) and communal feasting were central.

Remains of Feasting in the *tumulus* of Tienen-Grijpenveld (175–200 CE)

The large tumulus burial was constructed on the edge of the plateau at the southwestern outskirts of the *vicus* in the proximity of the cemetery. Coins of Antoninus Pius (138–168) and Marc Aurel (168–180), as well as other finds, place this burial in the last quarter of the second century. The burial mound still existed in 1469, when it was mentioned in a document proving the ownership of the land adjacent to the tumulus, but was leveled in later times. The monument was unknown at the time of excavation when it was discovered. The wooden burial chamber was set in a shaft 3.8 meters deep from ground level. The chamber was twelve square meters with timber-planked walls founded on ten posts. One of the postholes contained a foundation deposit of a statue of Dionysus/Bacchus. The floor of the burial chamber was covered with remains of the funeral pyre and some intact objects. On the wooden cover of the burial chamber the body of a young woman was laid next to a horse, four dogs and dozens of dog fetuses. Between the woman and the animals, a range of roof tiles, complete pots, and objects in bronze and glass were laid out. The shaft above this *mise-en-scène* of grave gifts and sacrifices was filled with what seems to be the remains of funerary feasts. From the remains in the shaft, almost 670 pieces of ceramics were identified. The location of the assemblage on top of the funerary chamber, the large amount of imported ware, as well as the higher-than-average completeness of the ceramics strongly indicate that these were the remains of meals held at the occasion of the funeral. The number of imported pots, mostly tableware is impressive. The assemblage consisted of lesson fewer than 65 plates in Samian ware, 14 plates in color coated ware (Rhine area) and 3 Pompeian red plates (north of Gaul). Complementary to the imported

plates were more than 70 plates in local ware. The diameters of some of the plates are exceptionally large compared to the diameters of plates used in domestic contexts, presumably because of the large amounts of food which had to be served for a large crowd. For drinking, the diners used 30 beakers in color coated ware (Rhine area), 24 cups and 3 bowls (Samian ware). Next to these imported drinking vessels were more than 130 beakers in local ware. A great number of wine amphorae of different origins fulfilled the need for wine at the feast: 7 amphorae from the south of Gaul, 2 amphorae from the Meuse valley, 1 amphora from Dourges and 2 flat wine amphorae from Roman Tienen. Furthermore 2 olive oil amphorae and 4 amphorae from unknown origin were present. Partly for the serving of wine, but maybe also for other beverages, 23 jugs were used. For cooking the food, more than 100 cooking pots and bowls, mostly from local origin, were used. *Mortaria* also played an important role in the preparation of the banquet: 4 *mortaria* were from the Rhône valley, 14 were imported from Bavay, 37 *mortaria* were locally produced and 3 *mortaria* in Samian ware were present. The use of incense in funerary ritual, which has been shown also in the cemetery contexts, is confirmed by the presence of 2 incense burners, one local and one imported from Bavay. The same is true for jars used for heating liquids, of which 13 individuals were used.

Within the context of the tumulus a large number of bronze objects, 39 in total, have been discovered. A surprisingly large minimum number of 162 individual glass objects have been registered. The identified assemblage consists of 7 bowls, 9 bottles, 4 *aryballoi*, 3 cups and 1 carinated beaker in black glass. Generally, the assemblage is very similar to the assemblage of glass of the cemetery in this phase. The carinated beaker in black glass, however, is a big exception. Objects made of black glass mostly appear in very rich burials of the second and third centuries.

The remains of the animals (except the horse and the dogs) were present with the ceramic remains of the feast in the shaft with the following preliminary results (provided by A. Leutacker and A. Ervynck). The remains of sheep or goat were of two juvenile animals, one sub-adult and one adult animal. The pigs were from an adult male and at least two piglets. Some species of domestic fowl were present as well as some skeletal elements of cattle. The wild species are a roe deer, a hare and some small birds.

Judging from the ceramic assemblage, more than one hundred and fifty people were present at the feast. The amount of meat implied by the bones recovered should have been plenty to feed such a large crowd. First of all, it is important to consider the amount of resources that were necessary to construct the monument: the digging of the shaft, the construction of the funerary chamber, the transport of the stone blocks to close the shaft, the collection of earth to construct the mound and the construction itself. The organization of the extremely lavish funerary feast, the collection of the animals to be sacrificed as well as the complex rituals that were carried out in the process, the presence of the woman laid down on top of the funerary chamber, all this together with the location of the tumulus so close to the settlement are indicative of the exceptional social status of the deceased person and the bond with local society. If the tumulus burial of Tienen, Grijpenveld belonged to a family owning a villa in the neighborhood, they might have had economic interests in the *vicus*, for example as a patron of craft workshops. The enormous amount of time and resources spent for no apparent material benefit is enigmatic. Such funerary feasts are until now unknown for the Roman period in this region.

The reason for this could be that in the past the research of tumulus burials was mainly focused on the contents of the funerary chamber and the grave gifts, while the finds in the shafts were not considered to be important.

Remains of Feasting in the *mithraeum* Complex (275–300 CE)

The *mithraeum* was built at the end of the third century in the southwestern outskirts of the town of Tienen, next to a road leading to the center of the *vicus* (Martens 2004a, 2004b). On the pebbled road we found a small bronze plaque (fig. 13.1) with the following inscription: *D(eo) I(nvicto) M(ithrae) | Tullio Spuri (f. or s.) | v(otum) s(olvit) l(libens) m(erito)* – "to the invincible god Mithras, Tullio (son or slave of) Spurius has gladly fulfilled his vow with good cause." Of the *mithraeum* itself, only the aisle of the *cella*, which had been excavated into the sub-soil, has survived the effects of erosion. The temple's focal point (the cult-niche) was situated at the northwestern end of the nave directly opposite the entrance. Here, where the bull-killing relief will have been located, a small floor, two by two meters, had been constructed of square hypocaust- and roof-tiles. The tiles of the platform at Tienen had sunk at the center because they had been laid over a pit that contained a dagger, some fragments of table- and coarse wares, and some animal bones. The deposit itself is evidently commemorative: certain items (whose precise significance is not always clear) are buried as a reminder of the consecration or renovation of a temple, or of some other important event.

Parallel to and outside the southwestern wall of the *mithraeum* was found a single cruciform pit and a group of three pits with a common upper layer. In the cruciform pit, which had steps leading down to the bottom, by far the greatest quantity of our material was found. Taphonomic examination indicates that all four were dug at the same time and then filled up together not long afterwards. The pits mainly contained charcoal, pottery and animal bones. The deposits in the pits were dry-sieved (5 mm) to ensure a maximum recovery of finds.

A large amount of pottery that can be identified as remains of rituals and feasting was discovered in the pits, in total 119 spouted jars (mainly used for heating liquids), 105 cooking pots, 89 lids, 107 plates, and 94 black-slipped beakers (mainly imports from Trier). Three beakers, probably to be interpreted as mixing vessels, are larger than the others; one of them (fig. 13.3) carries decoration and the Latin motto: *propino tibi*, "I drink to you." We also found fragments of at least 103 locally-produced incense burners and 12 oil lamps in color-coated ware imported from the Rhineland. The specially-commissioned vessels made for ritual use are original variations on known Mithraic themes; together they suggest something of the relative wealth and self-confidence of the worshippers of Mithras in late third-century Tienen. The first is a fragmentary crater in lead-glazed ware with an appliqué medallion representing a bust of Mithras or a torchbearer, with curls peeping out from beneath a Phrygian cap. Likewise, from a local workshop is a lid with a clearly ritual function. It presents three figures: an appliqué snake with a head carrying a comb, an incised crater, and an appliqué lion's head with the face of a man. Perhaps the most strikingly original of these items is a large locally-produced snake-vessel with an interior clay tube which begins at the bottom of the vessel, ascends the side wall, penetrates

the wall just near the rim and then curves towards the outside. Residue-analysis revealed that there are no residues of fats inside the vessel, implying that it was used for wine or wine and water. The extensive charring of the bottom proves that the liquid was heated over an open fire. This vessel undoubtedly played an important role in certain ceremonial activities and was designed and produced for this purpose in a local workshop. This is the only snake-vessel, of the hundreds that are known, in which the snake has a practical, as opposed to a purely symbolic, function.

Finally, another large snake-vessel, this time made at Rheinzabern, has a lion on one handle (fig. 13.2) and a snake on the other. In itself this would not be remarkable; what is surprising is that only the handles with the snake and the lion, together with some small fragments from the foot, seem to have been selected for deposition in the pits. The remainder is simply missing.

Nearly 14,000 animal remains from the pits mostly represent food remains that must have resulted from one enormous feast or banquet. The reconstruction of the minimum number of individuals indicates that at least 3 fish, 285 chickens, a number of wild birds, a hare, 10 piglets, 14 lambs and a quantity of beef were served. This total suggests that at least 285 persons were present at the meal; indeed, if everybody restricted himself to half a chicken, this total could be doubled. The charcoal found in the pit suggests that there was at least one (large) fire on the site, suggesting that the meal was cooked at the site. Some species present in the pits may be interpreted in a more symbolic way. The jackdaw, being a black bird, represents another case. The raven that figures in the Mithraic bull-killing scene is the symbol for one of the initiation stages. Could it be that the jackdaw found at Tienen's *mithraeum* served as a replacement of the raven? In any case, there are comparable finds from other *mithraea*. A further intriguing find from the *mithraeum* at Tienen is formed by the remains of two large eels. On the tauroctony, a snake is depicted which refers to the constellation of Hydra. Hydra, however, is the water snake, an animal thus easily replaced by an eel, especially in a part of the world where water snakes are absent. The symbolic meaning of the eels within the context from Tienen is perhaps further corroborated by the fact that large freshwater fish are rarely documented from Gallo-Roman sites in Flanders, suggesting that these fish may have been gastronomically uninteresting for the people of that time and must thus have been present at the banquet for other reasons. The time of year can be determined by the pattern of the molar wear stage (MWS) of the jaws of the lambs and piglets found in the pits. These indicate that the animals were slaughtered towards the end of June or the beginning of July, that is, the period of the summer solstice. To the scale of the feast, and its prodigality, we can add the hypothesis that it was held for an important event and possibly to coincide with the summer solstice. There is some evidence from other *mithraea* that this date was of great significance in the Mithraic calendar, although no other celebration on this scale is known. However, we have to stress that the Tienen evidence points to a singular, not an annual, event.

The general importance of collective eating in the cult of Mithras is well-known. The *mithraeum* itself, with its lateral podia, resembles Hellenistic rooms designed for sacred banqueting. The presence of animal bones in virtually all excavated *mithraea*, as well as the (occasional) cooking-hearths, confirms that sacrificial meals were regularly eaten within the temples. Nevertheless, the remains at Tienen point to something rather different from this usual or regular cult-meal. There is first the sheer scale of the event,

which meant that there were far too many participants for the *mithraeum* itself to house. Then there is the destruction and deposition not only of the crockery but of more than a hundred incense burners, as well as of the specially-commissioned objects with a clear ritual function, such as the snake vessel, the lid with the three images, and the lead-glazed crater. In all, about seven hundred ceramic vessels were destroyed and completely or partially discarded. There is finally the fact that only male animals seem to have been killed and eaten. This brings us to the question of the organization of the event, which must have involved extensive planning. The only comparable feast is for the occasion of the funeral of the tumulus burial, only a few meters away, but a century earlier.

An important question is why the pottery, the animal remains and the other objects were deposited in this manner. To answer this question, we must appeal to the wider context of deposition strategies in the northwestern part of the Empire. In this region, the practice of burying the remains of feasts is not at all uncommon, and in fact clearly goes back to Iron Age or even older customs. Sacrificial deposits including the remains of meals are found on temple sites, as well as in urban, military and rural settlements. In the *vicus* of Tienen itself we have indeed several examples of pits filled with the remains of meals, sometimes in combination with ritual objects such as incense burners, valuable metal objects and statues.

Concluding Remarks and Challenges for Future Research

The importance of communal dining for communities in the Roman Empire cannot be overestimated. Although large ritual dining events have been recorded in literary sources and are recognizable in the archaeological record, surprisingly few feasting deposits have been detected and described in detail up to now. The examples of the *vicus* in Tienen have shown that each event is unique and as such adds to the general understanding of Roman religious experience. The examples illustrate the need felt by the initiators for supernatural or divine interventions at different occasions. Detailed research of these events show how religion is constructed bottom up, by individual agents of specific location or areas. The experiences of the participants of feast were without doubt very personal, but it is clear from the sources that apart from the rituals performed for the gods, mainly sacrifice, special efforts were made to make it different from daily life not only by the ambience and the special enactments but also by the food and the way it was prepared and served. Therefore, it is vital to study feasting practices from local and regional perspectives to determine variations in practice and material culture used and to infer what these variations signify. The examples also show how communities and group identities, whether on the level of the vicus community or of a more exclusive cult community, can be built by feasting events, through the material culture selected and used for the occasion by the initiators.

A guiding principle for future archaeological research concerning rituals, and more specifically communal meals, is that they cannot and should not be studied in isolation. The identification of ritual contexts not only depends on the knowledge of ritual practices from a region but possibly even more so on the detailed knowledge on the material culture of everyday practice. Without this it is hard to identify the material culture that result from practices that deviate from daily/profane practices.

The efforts of organizing the event and how much was spent were mainly dependent on the wishes or desire for divine goodwill or interventions, the means available to the organizers and attendees and the prescriptions or rules, explicit and implicit, related to specific gods, festivals or cult communities and, last but not least, of the initiators' social position and ability to modify or invent such rules. The ability to identify the remains of ritual meals and the above-mentioned properties and meanings, however, is strongly determined by archaeological choices about recovery, sampling, and the way remains are studied after the excavation. In rescue archaeology or commercial archaeology it is hard to find means to support careful and precise excavation methods and extensive post-excavation research and this is perhaps the greatest challenge of future archaeological research on the subject.

Further Reading

Dietler and Hayden (2010) offer an introduction to feasts in general. Dunabin (2003) deals with the Roman banquet, Slater (1991) with the Greek one. Scheid (2005) and Rüpke (2005) discuss the relationship of sacrifice and banquet and their participants. Donahue (2005) proposes a typology of meals.

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CHAPTER 14

WATER

Olivier de Cazanove

Introduction

Water poses the same challenges as the other natural elements: it seems timeless and gives the misleading impression of being on equal footing with the men that were in contact with it two thousand years ago or more, although ancient wisdom, from Heraclitus to Seneca, teaches us that one cannot bathe twice in the same river. This romantic feeling about nature is based on the idea that the waters were, invariably, venerated and divine. Nonetheless, this is a rather generalizing misapprehension which has been contested vehemently (Scheid, 2007–2008).

Another misconception, a modern one, is that of topographic and hydrogeological determinism. Allegedly, the position of the sanctuary with regard to springs and waterways, the physical characteristics of the soil and water would allow a full understanding of not only the way they have been functioning and their importance, but also to enable the prediction of the likely location of those other sanctuaries which are yet to be excavated. It goes without saying that these parameters must be taken into account, but to think of them as explaining everything is a sign of a somewhat naïve scientific positivism.

Finally, there is a third possible reason for overplaying the importance of water in sanctuaries which have been actually excavated. Most of the time, the archaeologists are dealing with ground-level contexts, which is why they attach so much importance to what can be seen on the ground or just below it, in particular, the underground network of channels. This observation is valid for any type of archaeological site, urban, rural, or sacred. However, it does not allow us to speak of a "water city" whenever we excavate a residential area equipped with a system of supply and discharge of water, as well as basins or cisterns. Likewise, one must be cautious before labeling a sanctuary as a "water-sanctuary" for the single reason that it has water-supply facilities. In the

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French-speaking archaeological literature, this type of excessive generalization was facilitated by a book which has known great popularity – and which was otherwise filled with useful data: the *Manual of Gallo-Roman Archaeology* by Albert Grenier, that placed all shrines (other than the forum temples) under the category of "water monuments" (Grenier 1960).

This classification, albeit wrong, has at least the merit of drawing attention to the fact that the water-supply facilities in sanctuaries should not be analyzed differently from water supplies in other contexts labeled as "profane". A basin in a sanctuary is still a basin with all the constraints of its waterproofness, pressure, drain and overflow, etc. For at least a quarter of a century, there has been a certain type of archeological research called "water archaeology" (Tölle-Kastenbein 1990; Wikander 2000). Likewise, the approach I adopt in this chapter is less symbolical than technical and functional; not in the sense of the functional-processual archaeology of the 1960s but rather in a very practical sense. It consists of a series of analyses of archaeological sites, or parts of sites, considered from the point of view of their practical functioning.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, let us clarify once more that this is not a general study on the use of water in a cult place. Such an analysis would be much too long and does not fall into the scope of the present work. This study restricts itself to discussing the role of water in a particular topographical context, that of the sanctuary, inasmuch as archaeology allows for its understanding. It should also be specified that this study will not only include Greek and Roman examples, but also Italian and Etruscan, and will even include a Jewish parallel. This is not to deny obvious differences, but to highlight recurring material features.

The cult place, like any other living place, needs water. The origins of this water can vary. What immediately comes to mind is water from a nearby spring, but this was not always the case. Water can be brought up by aqueducts, occasionally from afar; or, in the case of ground water, it can be dredged by wells of greater or lesser depth; and finally, it can be rain water collected from the roof of the temple or its annexes. From the strictly practical and functional point of view (which is mine here), a roof, be it a profane or a sacred one, is not just a covering: potentially, it can also be a means of harvesting rain water which has not been allowed to escape through water-spouts and has been collected into cisterns. Those cisterns, once abandoned, may also receive an accumulation of disused offerings. The archaeological documentation on the topic is extensive (Populonia, Portonaccio Veii, Satricum, the temple of Venus in Pompeii, etc.; Cazanove in Testart 2012).

The sanctuary could feed its water-related needs in various ways; and even if the water comes from a single spring or more, this does not necessarily imply this specific sanctuary should be labeled as a "spring sanctuary" in the full sense of the word. A good epigraphic example of this type is provided by a decree from Orchomenos dated to the third century BCE, which prescribes the construction of a fountain (*krene*), "along the temple or at the location that seems to be the best" (*IG* VII 3169, cf. Cole 1988). In this case, it is not the sanctuary that develops around a source of water; instead, it is an existing sanctuary which acquires a *krene* "so that the citizens who sacrifice in the sanctuary of Meilichios can use drinking water". But, of course, the problem of the origins of this water remains open.

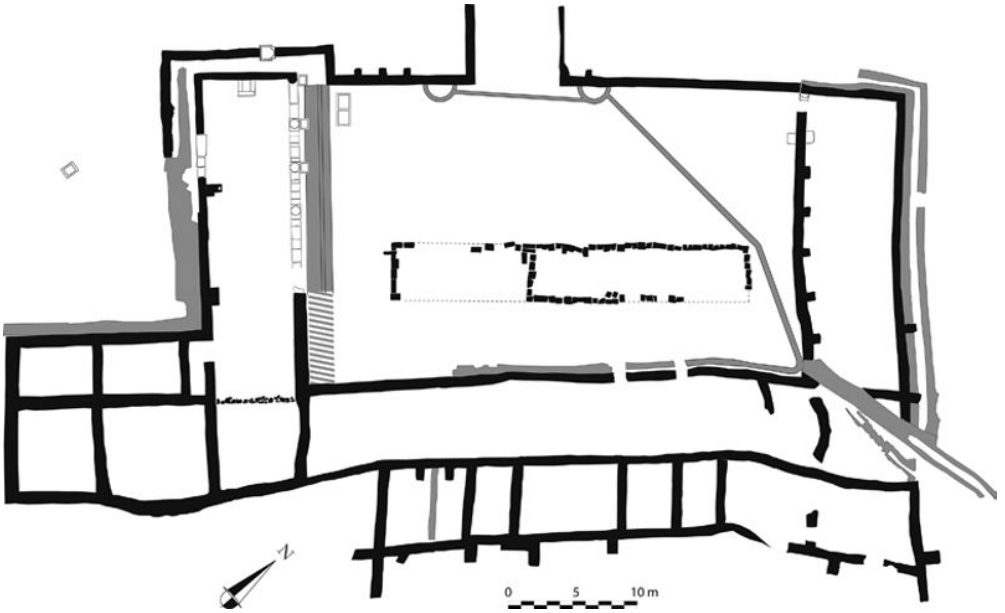

Figure 14.1 The Altar court of Mefitis at Rossano di Vaglio (synthesis of existing plans). Drawing by Olivier de Cazanove.

Purifying the Bodies

First of all, water is essential for preliminary purifications (Paoletti, Camporeale and Saladino 2004). "One has to sprinkle oneself (*perirrhainesthai*) upon entrance in the area of the sanctuary (*hiera kai teméné*)," Hippocrates said (*De morbo sacro,* 1, 13). No wonder, then, that it is at the gates of the sanctuaries that wells (such as in Eleusis or in the temple of Malophoros in Selinous) or basins for sacred water (*perirrhanteria*) turn up, a fact for which there is ample archaeological documentation (Pimpl 1997). Consequently, the sanctuary can be denoted periphrastically as that which lies "beyond the *perirrhanteria*" (Lucian, *Sacr.*, 13). A particularly clear illustration of this type of architectural layout is provided by the sanctuary of the Lucanian goddess Mefitis at Rossano di Vaglio in Southern Italy. The entrance to the paved courtyard where the altar stood was flanked by two basins. The basins themselves have disappeared, but the water supply for one of them remains along with the semi-circular gutters on the ground, whose purpose was to collect the surplus water drops. In southern Italy again, but this time in Pompeii, the entrance to the triangular forum is also of interest from this point of view. Outside (on the Via del Tempio di Iside), a street fountain is pressed against the Ionic portico that serves as propylaea. Inside, a *labrum* is fed by a fistula which runs along one of the Doric columns of the surrounding portico (Van Andringa 2009, p. 144–149). The water came from the aqueduct of Serino, that is, from the normal water supply system of the city.

Next to the temple itself fountains could also be found, undoubtedly for the same purpose (and perhaps also to provide water for washing the floor, as we shall see below).

For example, fountains called "Appiades" were found "striking the air with their gushing water" (Ovid, *Ars*, 1, 81–82) before the temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar. On a much smaller scale, the temple of Casalbore in the territory of the Hirpini (late third century BCE) had the same device: against the façade two symmetrical basins with bottoms made from cocciopesto (fragments of earthenware or brick mixed with lime and sand) were plated and were supplied by lead fistulas. The overflow escaped through open gutters, which then ran along the side porticoes in order to recover the rainwater too.

More complete than a simple spray of water is the purificatory bath which precedes the sacrifice. The preliminary sacrificial bath is attested by both literary sources (*eo lauatum ut sacrificem*: Plautus, *Aulul.*, 579–612) and the epigraphic commentaries of the Arvales (*promag*(*ister*)… *praetexta*(*m*) *deposuit et in balneo ibit*: *CFA* 114), which are in turn confirmed by archaeological findings in the modern district of the Magliana on the outskirts of Rome (Broise and Scheid 1987). In fact, thermal baths could also be part of the monumental equipment of prestigious sanctuaries in the provinces (Nielsen 1990; Bouet 2003) as well as in Italy (for example, the baths of Buticosus adjacent to the temples of Hercules and Aesculapius in Ostia). However, the thermal baths of sanctuaries are perfectly "normal": nothing in their layout could allow us to think of hydrotherapy; for that same reason, sanctuaries equipped with thermal baths do not qualify as "centres of curative treatment" (Scheid 1991). When these sanctuary baths are missing, especially in an urban context, it has been assumed that ritual cleansing could take place privately either at home or in the town's thermal establishments.

Occasionally, we also encounter (but primarily in spring sanctuaries, on which more in due course) deep basins that could potentially allow for a complete immersion of the body into the water. The presence of staircases allowing people to descend to the water is a clear indication in this regard. Indeed, it is difficult to think of these staircases, especially when they are double, as used exclusively for the maintenance and the cleaning of these basins. In the locality called La Tannerie at Châteaubleau, some 70 km southeast of Paris (mid 2nd–mid 4th centuries CE), a double basin (or rather a single basin divided into two) occupies the center of the small cult place—a recurring feature in the spring sanctuaries, as we shall see later. Two staircases occupy opposite angles in each basin. A somewhat analogous layout can be found at the sanctuary of Genainville in the territory of the Gallo-Roman city of the Veliocasses (but the basins here are located next to a temple, and each basin only has one staircase). At Villards-d'Héria in the Jura mountains, atypical baths along the torrent were next to a temple. The baths were divided into two unconnected parts, each one comprising a cold water basin, with flagstone pavement, accessible through two staircases of four steps each, as well as a room heated by hypocaust, where however there was no water. It was assumed that the rooms heated by the hypocaust served exclusively for warming up after the immersion into the ice-cold water of the bathing pools. One had to pay money for these immersions, as attested by collection boxes, *thesauroi*, which were found in the vicinity of each cold basin. Of course, in the last cases mentioned above, the bath was not about cleanliness (or at least not exclusively), let alone relaxation, as in the case of normal baths (including those found in the sanctuaries). The main purpose of those baths was the ritual purification as, *mutatis mutandis*, in the case of the Jewish *miqveh* practiced in pure water and in basins which are morphologically very similar to those we examine here (Zangenberg 2012). Conversely, one could be

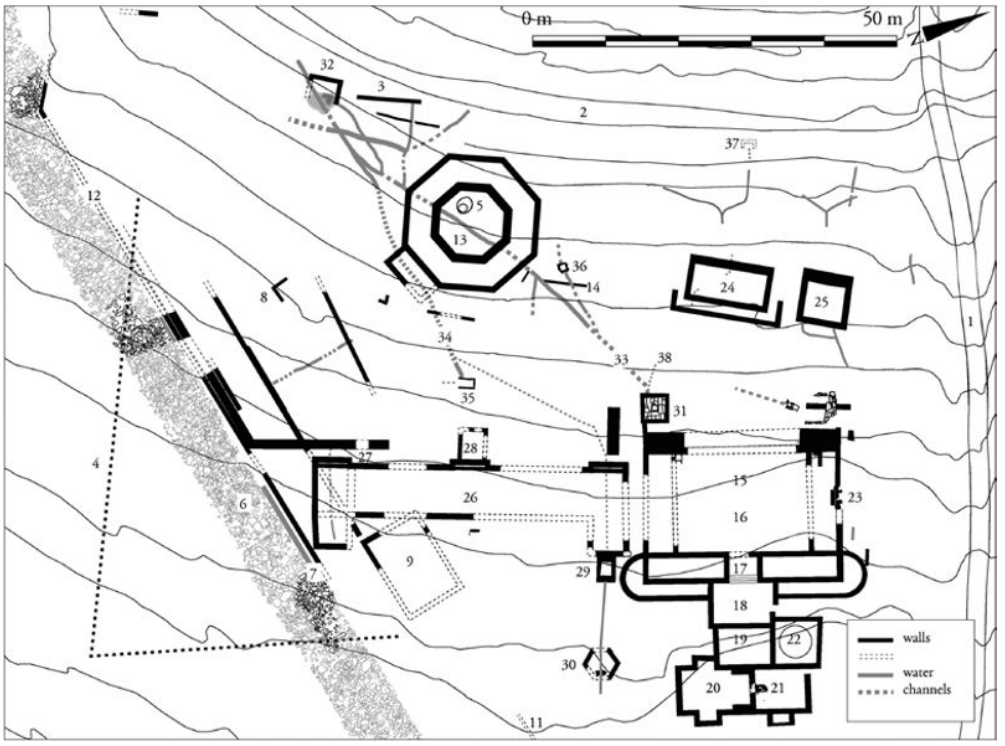

Figure 14.2 The sanctuary of Apollon Moritasgus at Alésia (after Cazanove et al. 2012). Enclosure dates to the La Tène period: 4; recess and basin: 32; 3 pipelines in deep trench: 33; octagonal temple: 13; bathhouses: 15–23; nymphaeum: 31. Drawing by Olivier de Cazanove.

prohibited from swimming in a spring: in the "pure and transparent" water springs of the Clitumnus in Umbria, where the water was so clear that one could count the coins (*stipes*) that were thrown inside (Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, VIII, 8; important commentary by Scheid 1996), one could swim only downstream from the bridge, which marked "the border between sacred and profane" (*profanique sacri terminus*). Access to the upstream part, on the contrary, was possible only by boat.

Washing the Cult Place

Water does not only clean human bodies to implement ritual purity. It can also be used to clean sanctuary areas polluted by cultic activities. One thinks primarily of animal sacrifice. The slaughtering and skinning of the victims meant that blood would flow on the altar; and even before the killing, the more or less prolonged presence of the animals that were destined to die, undoubtedly in combination with their growing nervousness, must have covered the soil with excrement. It was necessary to wash the altar area with water periodically. The sacrificial space has not been sufficiently examined from this point of view, despite the fact that there have been some clear examples of this. We have seen, for instance, that at Rossano di Vaglio in Lucania, two basins framed the access to the

court of the altar. The semicircular gutters, which reproduced their shape on the ground, were interconnected. Another gutter, connected with the two semicircular ones, diagonally crossed the courtyard, which was paved with limestone slabs. It turned to avoid contact with the sandstone altar (which proves the latter is of older date) and ended in a vaulted sewer, which evacuated water into the nearby ravine. This sewer covered, and put out of service, a pre-existing drain, which must have had the same function. Therefore, although the paved court was built after the Second Punic War (as already claimed by Adamesteanu (1992), who called it the "*sagrato*," and as confirmed by recent excavations in the area), the water evacuation system was the same in the first phase. The gutter running across the pavement was open – having slabs to provide coverage must be excluded as a possibility since they would have protruded above the ground and made everyone stumble over them. This layout must have had only one purpose: to allow the pavement to be washed thoroughly and to ensure that the stream led all the dirt into the sewer. Obviously, in the vicinity of an altar the impurities had to be blood and feces from the animals. Therefore, the water that ran in the open air at the surface of the court had an extremely practical function rather than a symbolic one. Its circulation was logically organized for this very purpose.

One can find parallels for the sacrificial space layout adopted at Rossano di Vaglio: at Civita di Tricarico for example, or even at the sanctuary of Malophoros in Selinous. Even the very famous Ara Pacis Augustae in Rome presents a comparable device. Below the foliated scrolls, a series of rectangular holes can be observed. From side to side these cross the wall of the marble enclosure at the level of the inner ground and hence were intended to lead the water outside. We might readily admit that their primary purpose could also have been to drain the rainwater in order to prevent it from stagnating in the interior. However, the multiplication of these holes suggests repeated washings with water, once again to clear away the filth which remained after the sacrifice. This analysis, perhaps a bit long, of an often neglected aspect is meant to show how fruitful a detailed study of architectural ensembles can be when considered from the point of view of their day-to-day functioning (as well as wear and tear). It also shows that water in the sanctuaries should be considered first and foremost for its practical use, before raising any question concerning its possible symbolic meaning.

Spring Sanctuaries

Water used in the sanctuary could be rainwater stored in cisterns, as seen above; or it could be water sourced from groundwater by wells of variable depth; or it could be water channeled through pipes, arriving via an aqueduct. Spring water was also widely used, if only for reasons of convenience. However, here a distinction needs to be made: not every cult space using water from a nearby spring automatically qualifies as a "spring sanctuary," which is an overused label. The establishment of a sacred space in the vicinity of various water sources can be dictated by practical considerations – just as any living space (such as residential quarters, artisans' workshops, etc.) tends to search for an abundance of water resources.

In a number of cases, though fewer than usually assumed, one must go further. The sanctuary exists for the spring and because of it; the spring becomes somehow its center

of gravity. One thinks primarily of sanctuaries placed at riverheads, where the eponymous divinities of these rivers were worshipped, such as the head of the river Clitumnus in Umbria, the riverhead of the Seine (Deyts 1983, 1994), in the margins of the city of Lingones, which provided several dedications to the goddess Sequana engraved on altars and anatomical ex-votos and, in the same region, the riverheads of the Yonne, the Marne, the Douix and other rivers. Naturally, one thinks also of waters having distinct, immediately identifiable therapeutic properties: the warm waters of Vicarello in Etruria (the *Aquae Apollinares*), those of Bourbonne-les-Bains, in Eastern Gallia, where numerous dedications to the god Borvo and his consort Damona have been found, or those of the famous sanctuary of Sulis Minerva at Bath (Cunliffe 1985). Sulphurous waters, like those of Albula in Latium, should also be mentioned, as well as mineral waters, like the waters of the spring depicted on the *patera* of Otanes, which were decanted and given out to be drunk. The particular interest developed by modern scholarship regarding sanctuaries located near hot springs dates from the period of the Enlightenment and, even more so, from the 19th century and is to be explained by the rise of the European spas. Scholars then wanted to see in the ancient "pilgrims" (a word at any rate inappropriate here) the predecessors of the modern spa visitors who "would take the waters", according to the traditional expression… after a trip by train.

Anachronism aside, there was also a tendency to forget that health-giving waters were not the only ones for which a cult could be developed. There were also cults related to harmful waters, which were wondrous too, but in a different way. The most obvious case is that of the sanctuary of Mefitis in Ansanto, in the territory of the Hirpini (not to be confused with the sanctuary of the same goddess at Rossano, the waters of which had no particular characteristics). In the hollow of a small valley, the small lake of the gas blowers ("*I Soffioni*") emits highly toxic gases. This was the exclusive domain of Mefitis (Cazanove in Cazanove and Scheid 2003). "Those who enter perish," Pliny said (*NH*, II, 208). Nobody would ever enter the place except to offer a sacrifice; the animal victims were immolated by simply being put in contact with the water until the carbon dioxide vapors suffocated them. Even today, one often finds birds and small animals asphyxiated in the ravine called "*il vado mortale*," at the point where the waters of the small lake flow down. On the other hand, in the actual bed of the "*vado mortale*" torrent, hundreds of objects and coins have been discovered. The statues and statuettes, made of wood, bronze or terracotta, may have slid down along the slope facing the "*Soffioni*" to the bottom of the ravine. The coins were probably thrown directly into it. In neither case did the donor have to penetrate the dangerous domain of the goddess in order to deposit his offering. The same goddess also had a temple, perhaps situated at the top of the Santa Felicità Hill. But the very core of the sanctuary was natural and, as seen above, practically inaccessible. Just like the sacred woods (Scheid 1993) or certain privileged wild sites, the places where remarkable springs shoot out of the ground supposedly were spontaneously inhabited by the divine (*numen inest*, "there is a divinity," Ovid says repeatedly, speaking, admittedly, of sacred woods). The difficulty lies in the fact that we archaeologists hardly succeed in grasping the divine presence with the tip of the trowel; this might well be a concept far too abstract for us.

In other cases, much less famous than those just mentioned, the striking fact is that the real center of the sanctuary was formed by the spring. The Aisillo, near Bevagna (in Umbria), is an artesian resurgence that has been architecturally enhanced as a circular

pool of 8 m in diameter surrounded by a portico lined with rooms, one of which at least appears to have been a small *cella*. Though this architectural complex has not been fully excavated, clearly its layout is centered around the basin of the spring and all other elements are of secondary importance when compared to the latter (Albanesi and Picuti 2009).

On a much smaller scale, the nymphaeum of Septeuil (France, Yvelines) presents similar architectural features. An octagonal marble basin is installed directly on the resurgence of the water, while on the back wall water flows out of the hydria of a nymph. In the sanctuary of Montbouy (France, Loiret), in the center of a large octagon which probably stood in the open air, a spring came out in a circular basin of 7 meters diameter, more exactly inside a triangle situated within the basin.

For various reasons, architectural enhancement of the spring at the very place where it runs out of the ground was not always possible. Sometimes, the staging of water in the sanctuary comes close to an optical effect: it is designed to impress the visitors by making them believe they have encountered the very spot where the water gushes from the ground, whereas it actually comes via channels and the source is located much further away. This is, for example, the case of the Deneuvre sanctuary (France, Meurthe-et-Moselle). There, a series of steles representing Hercules were raised at the edge of basins made of wood or stone (Moitrieux 1992). The main basin, topped with a canopy resting on four Tuscan columns, had in its center a hemispherical basin in the bottom of which an opening had been drilled, so as to enable it to connect below with something like a small dome-shaped expansion tank. The water was carried via an underground pipeline from the spring located at some distance. Flowing under pressure into the tank under the basin, the water would spurt out bubbling into the latter. This artifice gave the impression that the canopy was built directly on the very spot where the source was flowing out, which in fact was situated further upstream. Obviously, analyzing the role of water and water trails within the sanctuary is a task specifically set for history and archaeology of techniques, a fast-developing academic discipline encompassing a domain much wider than the limited and traditional scope of history of crafts.

A Case Study: The Cult Place of Apollo Moritasgus at Alesia

The water system in a sanctuary can evolve over time and reveal, along with new possibilities in the field of hydraulics, a change in the very conception of the cult and the ritual staging of divine power. In this context, it might be useful to expand further on a case study which I have worked on since 2008, that of a great place of worship of the Gauls, the sanctuary of Apollo Moritasgus at Alesia (Cazanove 2012).

The Roman sanctuary is preceded by a large ditched enclosure dated to the La Tène period, in which (as far as we know) water does not seem to have been an object of particular concern. Yet, the slope on which it settles enjoys a privileged location. Placed at the interface between two geological levels, where an aquifer has formed, it is the only point in the Alesian plateau from which water flows naturally (the other water sources are located much lower down).

The first traces of ritual activities at the water sources appear at the end of the reign of Augustus. A recess, enclosed by three walls, was built on the flank of the slope. A basin was carved out up in the front, in the marly soil. Inside the basin various offerings were found, such as coins (the well-known Lyon altar issues), a bell and ceramics.

By the middle of the century, a large-sized water channel, implanted in a deep trench, destroyed these early structures. Just above that aqueduct (but more than twenty meters downstream from the point where the water was collected), an octagonal temple was built with a central *cella* and a peripheral gallery. Its foundations have been carved out with large openings leaving room for the water channel. The water stream then remained invisible. Flowing under the consecrated temple, it must have been considered an exclusive privilege of the divinity: only its downstream part was appropriate for profane use in the thermal complex built at the same period. *Mutatis mutandis*, the situation is similar to that of the sanctuary of Jbel Oust in Roman Africa (in Tunisia), where the hot spring gushing out from a 6-meter depth under the temple remained inaccessible. Only in its downstream part did it supply a bathhouse (Ben Abed and Scheid 2003).

In Alesia, at the time of Hadrian, a nymphaeum was built at the southwest corner of the baths. Water – at last visible at the end of its underground journey – gushed out into a monumental basin, just below the feet of the statue of a goddess holding a snake. Most likely the goddess was Sirona. This goddess, often paired with Apollo, is mentioned on a fragmentary inscription found a little further on. The nymphaeum housed stone offerings representing babies in swaddling clothes, heads, anatomical ex-votos (breasts, upper and lower extremities). Therefore, contrary to what one might think, a spring in a sanctuary is not something fixed, an element given once and for all (apart, naturally, from ground water variations). Water, by definition formless, is likely to be "reconsidered," "reorganized" in order to adapt it to new containers, new water trails, and a new setting of the cult.

At this point, it is necessary to say a word about the problem of the offerings and the water. Despite periodically repeated assertions, there are no clear cases of offerings thrown directly into a body of water (which would then constitute an open votive deposit, according to the terminology of Bouma 1996, p. 44–47, which I disagree with), save for some well-specified categories to which I shall return. The wooden statues and anatomical ex-votos found in large numbers in the springs of the Seine (Deyts 1983) and the spring of Les Roches at Chamalières (Romeuf and Dumontet 2000) were meant to be fixed to the ground or presented on supports. Swept along with the current because of the variations of the water level, they behaved like floating wood and owed their preservation to the damp environment where they were found. On a more general level, any attempts made to bind together water sanctuaries, therapeutic cults and anatomical ex-votos are unconvincing. To prove that, we don't need to look any further than the territory of the Roman Gaul: suffice it to think of the sanctuary of Halatte (France, Oise), where numerous anatomical limestone ex-votos – but no spring – were found. Most spring sanctuaries were not specifically therapeutic. Just because some of them did receive anatomical ex-votos is not a reason why they should be considered as such. Wishes for health could be settled in a large number of different shrines. This being said, it is true that certain springs were considered as having sanitary or healing capacities.

What was actually thrown into the water, then? Mostly coins, thrown either into springs (Clitumnus discussed above, Vicarello, Bourbonne-les-Bains: Sauer 2005) or into fords, which will be discussed later. We know this money was collected afterwards (*CIL* XI, 4123). More rarely, these offerings were also metal crafted objects, such as the bronze statuettes found in the "Lake of the Idols" at Mount Falterona, between Tuscany and Umbria, or, conversely, ingots of crude metal such as those found in Toulouse. In any case, it is more or less precious metal (in the form of coins or bullion) the inviolable waters were given custody of, thus functioning like a *thesauros* or a vault of sorts (Cazanove in Testart 2012).

Among the findings from the sacred spring of the sanctuary of Sulis Minerva at Bath, which include more than 12,000 coins, a category of objects (which are not offerings) deserves special attention: the 130 curse tablets (*defixiones*) found there. More specifically, the tablets contain "prayers for justice" in which revenge is called upon or reparation is asked for a robbery generally committed inside the sanctuary. Significantly, these messages were deposited, according to the editor, "into the spring – the entrance to the goddess' domain" (Cunliffe, 1988, 360). However, other curse tablets made of lead have been found in springs (e.g., the prayer to the God Maponos at Les Roches springs at Chamalières, or even the *defixiones* found in lamps thrown into the fountain of Anna Perenna in Rome).

Out of the Sanctuary

The bodies of water and other "sacred lakes," which undeniably exist (for example those of Toulouse, where tradition reports that large amounts of gold and crude metal were stored in the water), do not belong to the scope of this study because they are known only by literary texts, not from archaeological evidence. On the other hand, a debate recently has risen on "weaponry in the waters" (Testart 2012; significantly the subtitle of the book is: "Questions of Interpretation in Archaeology"). In fact, this debate is mostly about European protohistory, and deals with the well-known examples of La Tène in Switzerland and the fords of Saône in France. The point is whether the swords, helmets, etc., found by means of excavations in the wetland, underwater explorations or simple dredging, are intentional (cultic) deposits or not. Many scholars are inclined to agree with this view, which the aforementioned volume has contested vigorously.

However, there is an offering that for sure could be thrown into the water: coins. Coins were thrown not only into sanctuaries themselves and springs but also in other contexts, for example when fording a stream. At Condé-sur-Aisne in Picardy, on the site of an ancient paved ford across the river, thousands of coins from late La Tène period to the end of antiquity were recovered by dredging. Even more impressive in terms of quantity is the deposit of 22,438 coins discovered in the Saint-Léonard ford in the riverbed of the Mayenne (Besombes and Barrandon 2003–2004). These findings allow archaeologists to document ritual gestures which might seem trivial for having been so frequently repeated. They seemingly stay on the border between cultic and cultural domains, but they conveniently remind us that the ritual and its material manifestations

(including those in which water plays a role) were not confined to sanctuaries. Finally, they invite us not to overestimate (in this case as in many other ones previously examined) the role of the water in ritual, but rather to contextualize it in every case. When one throws a coin when crossing a ford, the water element is less important than the crossing of the river. Besides, the material elements (the river, the ford, the path) do not have a meaning unless they are considered in relation to the journey undertaken by a singular traveler. Each offering, no matter how modest it may be, like the throwing of a coin, is important in that it bears direct witness to an act of individual piety. The difficult thing, in this case as in many others, is to reconstitute the ritual gesture (and, if possible, its meaning) from archaeological evidence. In sanctuaries and elsewhere, water is only one of the parameters of this complex equation.

Further Reading

There are several reference works on water archaeology (among others, Tölle-Kastenbein 1990 and Wikander 2000). Thermal baths in particular have a well-established tradition of scholarly studies (such as Nielsen 1990, Bouet 2003; *The Roman Baths* 1991, in which can be found John Scheid's study "Shrines and Baths under the Empire," which rightly questioned established ideas; for a monograph on the thermal baths in the sanctuary, see Broise and Scheid 1987). On the other hand, there is no comprehensive study on water management in places of worship apart from interesting preliminary remarks by Cole 1988 on the Greek world and Scheid 2007–2008 on the Roman world. The congresses wholly or partly devoted to this topic have very different methodological orientations (Cazanove and Scheid 2003; Gasperini 2006; Di Giuseppe and Serlorenzi 2010). One has then to refer, for example, to the monographs devoted to the great spring sanctuaries of the West, which provide valuable evidence: among others, those written on the springs of the Seine (Deyts 1983 and 1994), the spring at Bath (Cunliffe 1988), and the springs of Bourbonne-les-Bains (Sauer 2005). The controversial issue of votive offerings thrown into bodies of water has just been re-examined, but it is primarily related to the prehistoric period (Testart 2012).

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CHAPTER 15

Temporary Deprivation: Rules and Meanings

Richard Gordon

Temporary deprivation is here viewed as a cover term for a range of issues under the loose rubric of corporeality ("bodiliness," "substantiality"). As such, it allows us to focus upon a selection of different ways in which the natural body could be used to generate subjective religious meanings in Greco-Roman antiquity. "Temporary" denotes a period that may be short or relatively long, but by definition of a different order from permanent or semi-permanent deprivations for religious ends, such as life-long abstentions (notably virginity, or the food-, and even naming-, taboos imposed on the *Flamen Dialis* at Rome), long-term ascetic practices such as Christian anchoritism, protracted beggary and vagrancy, emasculation, infibulation and other forms of permanent mutilation as practiced by the Metroac *galli* and analogous groups. Some such temporary abstentions or deprivations in a religious context are essentially voluntary and conditional: if you wish to enter the temple, you must not do X beforehand; if you wish to celebrate this festival, you must not eat Y; if you wish to join this group, you must agree to suffer Z. Others are matters of interpretation, personal or via divination, of the temporary loss of wellbeing, i.e., the experience of generalized types of physical and mental suffering – no one believes their nose-bleed or the fish-bone stuck in the throat is due to divine anger for some sin, or to witchcraft, but the case is more difficult when the children are all sickly, animals fall ill, and rust or mildew appears on the grain; or when one feels unable to eat or suffers repeatedly from non-specific internal pains, lassitude, anxieties or depression. The interpretation of somatic or somato-psychic events as due to divine or daemonic intervention is in each case elective but not arbitrary: such choices are legitimated by an infra-structure of assumptions widespread in antiquity about divine beings and their possible modes of action in the world.

An early response in contemporary religious studies to the post-Foucaldian fashion for corporeality was to say, we know all about that – more formally, to point to the wealth of somatic images and metaphors in religious contexts (Coakley 1997). This reaction, of

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course, rather missed the point. Since then, however, "embodied religion" has become a catch-word to be applied in all sorts of contexts (Kamppinen 2011: 209). To judge from a rather uneven recent collection (Ahlbäck 2011), the topics of greatest current interest cluster mainly round the body's role in the constitution of place, space, and boundaries; in the construction of identity and difference; and, perhaps nowadays, with the worldwide rise of Pentecostal and charismatic healing, most important, the body perceived as sick, over-burdened or threatened. These modern choices admirably suit my purpose here, for they neatly correlate with what seem to me the major uses of the theme of temporary deprivation in religious contexts in the ancient world. I would pick out five kinds of temporary deprivation for which we have some archaeological – albeit almost exclusively epigraphic – evidence and which link directly to these three major themes. My remit here, however, is to focus not so much on embodiment as such, to which a different section of this Companion is devoted, but rather the subjective experiences elicited by short-term deprivation in a religious context, whether voluntary or not. In the present context, therefore, I view the physical body as a vacant signifier.

My first two types relate to boundary marking: the most important group of rules here regulate admission to sacred areas public and private. These rules form a sub-group of the much larger set of texts conventionally termed "sacred laws" (which I retain solely because of its familiarity); it is unnecessary here to enter into the recent discussion concerning the overall appropriateness of the term (e.g., Parker 2004; Lupu 2009: 4–112; Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2012). Much less important is fasting in the context of civic rituals and private mourning, which was often associated with sexual abstinence. The third type of deprivation for religious ends concerns rituals of admission to religious associations ("initiation", see Chapter 19) involving short-term loss of physical integrity and autonomy. Such loss, of course, composes a difference between those who have experienced it and those who have not, but is primarily aimed at the construction of a specific religious identity. The two last, the individual interpretation of illness as resulting from divine anger, and physical symptoms interpreted as due to "magical" attack, presuppose the category of the endangered body, a term I take from the account of contemporary Creole folk-religion on the island of Mauritius by Danielle Palmyre-Florigny, herself of Creole descent (Palmyre-Florigny 2009: 57–58). Deprivation here refers to the short- or middle-term loss of health and wellbeing.

Ordinances Regulating Admission to Sacred Areas in Civic and Private Cults

It is a truism that no elaborate precautions were ordinarily required to protect Greek and Roman sanctuaries from defilement; they were considered simply as "more sacred" than other locations, and the state of personal purity required for admission to a sacred area or before sacrifice (Greek *katharos*; Latin *purus*, *castus*; no abstract noun in either case) was easily acquired. This relatively relaxed position is doubtless linked to the absence of a professional priesthood with an interest in representing itself as an indispensable mediating instance between human communities and the divine world. There is nevertheless a striking difference between Greek and Roman practice here: whereas there are numerous inscriptions from all over the Greek world regulating admission to and behavior within sacred sites, public and private, hardly any such texts in Latin have survived.

In addition, their concerns are markedly different from Greek ordinances, since they are based on the consecration formulae (*lex dedicationis*) and, apart from specifying the precise boundaries of the *locus sacer*, regulate legitimate and eventual profane use (including the dumping of refuse), ownership of dedications, sacrificial practice, classes of persons to whom admission is denied (e.g., slaves to the temple of Mater Matuta), potential repairs, and penalties for infraction. The best example is the *lex sacra* of 13 July 58 BCE for the temple of Iuppiter Liber at Furfo in Sabine territory, near modern L'Aquila (*ILS* 4906). The regulations for the altar of Diana on the Aventine in Rome were taken as a model here, and familiarity with them was assumed (e.g., *ILS* 112: the altar of Augustus at Narbo, 12 CE; see Chapter 31).

The Greek concern was rather with *eukosmia*, the "good order", encompassing purity, modesty, deportment, proper behavior, sometimes – especially in the later period – moral integrity, that ensured the *prima facie* success of religious enterprise, public and private (Deshours 2006: 99–100; Stavrianopoulou 2006: 137–43). At festivals, where crowds might be reckoned with, such good order might have to be enforced by officials with staves and whips, or the imposition of fines. But in the ordinary course of events, it was assumed that it was sufficient for the rules to be inscribed on stelae erected immediately outside the entrances to the sanctuary (*temenos*) or not far away; part of a Hellenistic stela with detailed regulations for pilgrims to the Asklepieion at Pergamon, for example, was discovered re-used as a drain-cover in the major street leading to the *propylon* of the sanctuary (Wörrle 1969: 167). One copy of the two long purity ordinances at Kos was to be erected "near the temple of Demeter, by the inner ante-chamber, the other in front of the eastern portico of the Asklepieion" (*LSG* no. 154A, ll. 10–12). The ordinances for the shrine of Alektrone at Ialysos/Rhodes provide that the *hierotamiai* (temple supervisors) should see to the erection of three stelae in Lartian stone inscribed with the ordinances: "they are to set up one stela at the entrance on the road (to the *temenos*) leading from the city, another above the visitors' dining-hall, the third on the way down from the 'Achaia' (the acropolis)" (*LSG* 136 ll.13–18). The mention of a dining-hall here clearly suggests that this text at any rate, like the example from Pergamon, was directed to visitors from outside the city itself. The setting up of an inscribed "sacred law" to define qualifications for worship might therefore be due as much to the impulse to advertise as to fear of pollution. Besides, purification from minor pollutions was available at the entrance to the *temenos* itself, where jars of water stood ready.

Ordinances involving temporary deprivation were not regarded as a specific sub-set of the rules for admission to the sanctuary, but were classed among general purity rules, for example relating to contact with birth, death, sickness, corpses or previous presence at a funeral, all of which were generally held to contaminate the sanctuary and cause the deity to abscond, thus invalidating the efficacy of ritual acts (Lupu 2009: 14–21). Thus a second-century CE ordinance from an unknown cult at Lindos/Rhodes provides a simple list of "external" pollutions, each with a temporal marker:

> (After eating) lentil soup – (no admission for) three days; ~ goat's flesh – three days; ~ (goat's) cheese – one day; after an abortifacient [or perhaps rather a spontaneous abortion] – 40 days; after a funeral in the family – 40 days; after ordinary sexual intercourse (between married couples) – the same day, provided they are sprinkled with holy water and have previously been rubbed with oil; in the case of a virgin [the rest is lost…] (*LSG* 139 ll.9–18).

Whether or not they concern temporary abstention, such rules produced what has been called a "somatic mode of attention" (Csordas 1993: 138), a context-bound awareness of a range of bodily experiences which might in themselves be wholly forgettable; lentil soup and goat's cheese, for example, were staples of the dietary régime, and we may assume that kids especially were often slaughtered for their meat (it is a mere shibboleth of the "Paris School" that in antiquity meat was almost always eaten in the context of public sacrifice). By demanding anamnesis (effortful recall) of such somatic events in the immediate past, rules involving temporary deprivation foregrounded the body in the reproduction of a culturally-elaborated heterotopia, the perpetual immanence of divinity. We may also think of them as one device among many others for attracting divine attention (Chaniotis 2009: 96) or as the (rather low) price to be paid for access to the "divine concentrate" focused upon specific locations, above all temples and shrines. On the other hand, although a few rules – such as the bans on eating goat's flesh, on sexual contact, and contact with the dead – recur frequently, as a set the ordinances are locally variable, in other words, they reveal no system, but were primarily a means of reinforcing local religious micro-identities and -alterities. At the same time, there are clear differences of attitude regarding the treatment of men and women, which partly reproduce widespread negative assumptions about female bodiliness but also reflect tensions between notions of temple-decorum and ordinary desires to exploit an opportunity for public self-staging through dress and finery (Cole 1992; Ogden 2002).

Mainstream ordinances imposing temporary abstention can be divided into four groups:

- (Hetero-)sexual intercourse: most civic regulations assume this to be normal and require only that the partners wash before entering the temple, if that. Earlier regulations tend not to distinguish between different types of sexual contact, though there are exceptions, such as the fourth-century BCE regulation at Metropolis in Ionia that a man is impure for two days after sex with his wife, but for three after sexual contact with a *hetaira* (*LSAM* 29 ll.4–6); the ordinances at Kyrene in modern Cyrenaica, of about the same date, treat intercourse during the day as negligible, but at night, as requiring a full sacrifice (*LSS* 115A ll.11–14). In the Hellenistic period, however, as at the temple of Athena Nikephoros at Pergamon (*LSAM* 12 ll.5–6), both sexes might be required not to have had intercourse with someone other than the spouse for at least twenty-four hours. Pollution through menstruation by contrast is almost unknown (Wächter 1910: 36). The implicit asymmetry of the gender rules is nevertheless clear from literary sources, such as the remark of Theano, the wife of Pythagoras, on being asked how long after sex a woman is to be considered pure (*kathará*): "After sex with her husband at once; with another man, never" (Diogenes Laertios, *Vitae philosophorum* 8.43). As we shall see, foreign cults especially found this issue a rewarding means of asserting difference.
- Alimentary codes: apart from goat and pork products, and lentils, we sometimes find that beans, garlic, animal hearts, other animal parts, in certain cults fish (listed in Wächter 1910: 101–2), are to be avoided, either because they cause pollution or (in the case of the fish) because they are sacred. Interdiction of wine is frequently mentioned in literary sources, but not in the inscribed "sacred laws" (a fairly complete list will be found in Ziehen 1936: 97–100).

- Dress codes: common injunctions relate to the wearing of hats, embroidered and/or dyed clothes, or with colored borders, jewelry and other ornaments, and make-up. A good example is the case of the temple of Despoina (and Demeter) at Lykosoura in Arkadia: "No admission to the temple for those wearing golden (jewelry) or anything accursed ([*ana*]*thema*) or a robe dyed purple, or embroidered with flowers, or black, or sandals, or a ring" (*LSG* 68, ll.2–7; third century BCE). Although the point is almost invariably tacit, these rules had the intended effect of restraining relatively well-off women from displaying their status; an ordinance from the cult of Demeter at Patrai, for example, forbids women to wear more than one obol-weight of gold jewelry, i.e., about one gram, which would be the weight of a pair of very small ear-rings (*LSS* 33, ll. 3–5; third century BCE).
- Prohibited substances, objects, persons: weapons of iron and bronze; anything made of iron or bronze except coins; shoes and other objects made of leather, or the hides of certain animals such as pigs or goats; objects made of gold; belts and knots, purses or bags, keys, hair-pins. In some cases, myrtle might be considered polluting; elsewhere, a dog bite. Classes of persons, foreigners, slaves, women, men, non-initiates might all be excluded from particular rites. All such rules are specific to particular sanctuaries or cults, though some occur more frequently than others; they are elaborated and institutionalized versions of what we may call rules of deportment in the face of the divine, known already from Hesiod.

Techniques of increasing the religious intensity of a cult include the multiplication of the number of interdictions, their extension to events, such as processions, outside the *temenos* stricto sensu, and ratching up the penalties. Such devices are typical of healing cults, mysteries and foreign cults, and all tend to intensify in the imperial period. To take one example of each:

1. Men wishing to enter the temple of Asklepios at Pergamon were forbidden to have sex with their wives for ten days previously (*LSAM* 14 ll.1–2; third century CE).
2. In the ordinances of the reformed mysteries of the Great Gods at Andania/Messenia (91–90 BCE), there is a special section (§4 = lines 15–26) devoted to minute prescriptions of the dress of initiates and officials during the procession. For example: "No woman is to wear gold (jewelry), or rouge or white(-lead) make-up, or a head-band or a hair-bun, or sandals unless they are made of felt or of leather from a sacrificial victim … If anyone offends against the regulations concerning clothing or anything else that is forbidden, the *gynaikonomos* is to step in and is authorized to have it rendered useless and dedicate it to the gods" (Deshours 2006: 31, 102–6 = Gawlinski 2012: 68–71, with her commentary on 113–33).
3. An ordinance from an unknown but probably foreign cult at Lindos on Rhodes expressly covers almost every conceivable eventuality, combined with high pollution periods: no weapons; no goat-leather shoes, or anything else of goat; no knots in the girdle; 40 days' pollution after a still-birth or spontaneous abortion by one's wife, dog or donkey; 41 days after a rape or defloration of a virgin; 41 days after a family funeral; 7 days and a shower after a neighbor's funeral; 7 days and a shower after touching a corpse, 3 days after being in the same house; 3 days after coming into contact with a woman in childbirth; 11 days after childbirth (then fragmentary ordinances relating to sexual contact) (*LSS* 91, ll.6–18; third century CE).

Now it is clear that some of these interdictions could easily be enforced: the *gynaikonomos* at Andania simply had to look at the women's faces to see if they were wearing make-up. Gold might glitter. But what about the shoes made of leather from a sacrificial animal? Who could know when one last had had sex, by night or by day? Who would know if one happened to own a donkey that had suffered a spontaneous abortion? Or if three weeks ago one had entered a house where a corpse was lying? Face-to-face communities and all that, indeed; but there is a high degree of legalism here. To my mind, the multiplication of unenforceable pollution rules, quite apart from its symbolic statement about the nature of divinity both in general and in particular, had a systemic function at the level of theodicy. Occasional misfortune, and in particular ill-health, threatened the viability of the theodicy of good fortune (*Theodizee des Glückes*), which derived the prosperity of cities and individuals from their piety towards the gods (Weber 1916: 4–5). An essentially uncontrollable set of pollution-dangers reduced the threat to the major theodicy by opening up the possibility that one was oneself to blame for this or that misfortune, in (unintentionally) failing to observe a rule precisely at the moment of renewing one's formal reputation for *eusebeia*. The unmanly anxiety that might result from a world full of spirit-danger is comically described by Theophrastus in *Charakteres* §16, "The superstitious man". All this implies that rules of this type were indeed internalized, especially in relation to important temples in the vicinity, and to private, elective cults. In Section §4 below we shall see how such strategies might work out when they became part of an enforceable temple-script dependent upon auto-diagnosis of illness as due to failure, witting or unwitting, to obey pollution-rules. Those temple-ordinances, generally of later date, that took a hint from Delphi and left it to worshippers to decide on their worthiness to worship, such as the text from Mytilene that reads: "Entry to the *temenos* permitted to un-polluted persons of good conscience" (*LSS* 82), implicitly recognize the superior efficacy of auto-control and the anamnesis implied by it.

Fasting and Other Forms of Self-Denial

By comparison with Christianity and Islam, fasting, the deliberate short-term abstention from (all or most) food for religious ends, was of little importance in the religious systems of Classical antiquity; indeed, at Rome it was known only in the *ieiunum Cereris*, itself a Greek rite (Cicero, *pro Balbo* 55; Festus 144.9–10 Lindsay). Since virtually the only information about such practices is literary, and such rules never appear in the temple ordinances (Arbesmann 1929; Ziehen 1936), this section can be very brief. In traditional Greek religion, fasting was effectively confined to the cult of Demeter, in allusion to her mourning for Persephone (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 47–50). The middle day of the Thesmophoria, when married women sat on the ground on mats made from antaphrodisiac plants, was thus named *nêsteia*, Fasting (day) (Parker 2005: 274). Fasting was also practiced at the Eleusinian mysteries, though nothing precise is known about it; and at the Haloa, likewise a festival associated with Demeter. Apuleius imagines candidates for Isiac and Osirian initiations eating a restricted, vegetarian diet for ten days beforehand, and no wine (*Metamorphoses* 11.23; 28; 30). Late sources mention fasting during the March festival at Rome in honor of the Mater Magna. Brief periods of sexual abstinence on the part of the hierophant at Eleusis during the celebration of the mysteries are also

attested (Arrian, *Epicteteae dissertationes* 3.21.16) and, on the part of women, during the Thesmophoria (Cornutus, *Theologia graeca* 28.19) and in the cult of Isis (Heyob 1975: 116–7).

Rituals of Admission to Religious Associations (Initiation)

There is a small amount of literary evidence relating to mis-handling during initiation ceremonies, though it hardly falls under the rubric of temporary deprivation, rather the inducement of fear and anxiety. A clear case is the reported beating of initiates by a priest wearing the mask of Demeter Kidaria at the Great Festival of the goddess at Pheneos/ Arcadia (Pausanias 8.15.1). Glaukothea, the mother of Aeschines, is supposed to have appeared to her initiates, in the dark, as the horrifying Empousa (Idomeneus of Lampsakos, *FGrHist* 338 F2). The well-known winged female daimon with a whip in the Dionysiac wall-decoration of the Villa Item at Pompeii, by contrast, is to be construed as an allegory of the "blow" of possession (Burkert 2004: 98). The only archaeological evidence for sensory deprivation in an initiatory context that I am aware of derives from the Eleusinian mysteries, and from the cult of Mithras which differs in many ways from the ordinary run of Greek and pseudo-oriental initiatory cults (Burkert 1987: 41–2).

With regard to Eleusis, the well-known Urna Lovatelli, an early-imperial marble ash-urn found in the *columbarium* of the Statilii and now in the Palazzo Massimo in Rome, offers three scenes from Herakles' mythical initiation; in one he is represented as seated with his head and shoulders entirely covered in a drape (see http://arachne.uni.koeln.de/item/ marbilder/4066748). Assuming that this alludes to a genuine ritual event referring to Demeter's sorrowing for her daughter Persephone, it undoubtedly involved a degree of sensory deprivation. It can therefore be compared to the well-known fragment of Plutarch's lost work *On the Soul* comparing death to (Eleusinian?) initiation: "At first one strays and wanders, is wearied by running this way and that, walks apprehensively and aimlessly through the darkness, and then, just before the dénouement (*telos*), experiences every imaginable terror, shivering, trembling, sweating, astonishment" (frg. 178 Sandbach). It is often stated, though there is no explicit evidence and Plutarch seems to deny it, that the initiands were at this stage actually blindfolded (cf. Clinton 2003: 65–7). Darkness, however, was clearly important.

There are two relevant images from the cult of Mithras. Both represent the initiate(s) experiencing humiliation and distress, deprived of all dignity, evidently as a test of *makrothymia*, the ability to withstand physical and psychological distress. The first is an initiatory scene on a specially-commissioned ritual-vessel found at Roman Moguntiacum/ Mainz (c. 120–40 CE). It shows a naked, or barely clothed, initiand with his wrists apparently tied together, gazing at a seated teletarch, whom we know from other evidence to be a Pater, Father, the leading figure in a Mithraic association, who is seated on a chair and aiming at the initiate with a bow and arrow (see Figure 15.1). The initiand, whose small size indicates the power relations at play here, holds up his hands to protect his face. Behind him is a mystagogue, whose gesture indicates that he is declaring something to the initiand concerning the (meaning of the) test. Relative sizes, dress versus nakedness, knowledge and power versus ignorance and subjection: the play of

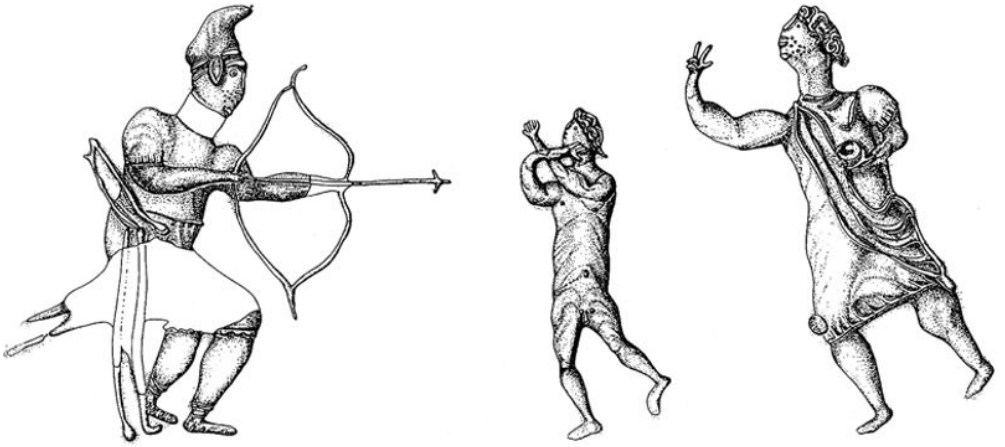

Figure 15.1 Ritual krater from a mithraeum in Mainz. The "test of bravery" as an element in the initiation of a Mithraic *Miles* (Soldier), c.120–140 CE. Courtesy of Landesarchäologie Mainz.

opposites here suggests the rehearsal of a *théâtre de terreur*, where the humiliated body mimes the mind's distress. From the scene on the other face (not illustrated here), we know that the dedicator was marking his admission to the second grade, *Miles* (Soldier). The ritual-vessel itself, which was used as a wine-krater during the joint meals, was one of a series dedicated in a wealthy mithraeum in the center of Moguntiacum, which was unfortunately destroyed without proper excavation on its discovery in 1976 (see Huld-Zetsche 2008, whose interpretation is, however, to be rejected).

The second item, the seven surviving images of initiation painted on the façade of the two facing podia of the mithraeum at S. Maria Capua Vetere near Naples, can be dated almost exactly a century later (see the excellent illustrations of five of them in Clauss 2012, color plates 10–15). In essence, they are very similar to the Mainz scene, which suggests that we are justified in supposing that similar, though certainly not identical, types of ritual were widely practiced in the cult. Another hint is the sword blade found in the mithraeum at Riegel/Schwarzwald that had been sawn in half and the two halves joined by a metal half-hoop, large enough to fit round a small person's trunk, thus representing a moment of violent death. In all the scenes at Capua, the initiand – it is not at all certain whether a specific grade is involved, or whether they are merely generic – is naked, his red-brown skin a synecdoche for the male gender, and in most he is kneeling, on one or both knees, even lying prostrate. In all he is the passive subject of others' actions; in several cases the teletarch is wearing a "Greek" crested helmet.

The role of sensory deprivation is clear from two scenes where the initiand is blindfolded: in one he is being pushed forward by his mystagogue; in another, a burning torch is being thrust into his face while his hands are tied behind his back. Scenes of voluntary sensory deprivation, fear and humiliation such as these, though staged, use the body as a text for the inscription of moral virtue and a sense of the necessity of the asymmetrical distribution of socio-moral power (Gordon 2009). Given the date, between 225 and 240 CE, we cannot exclude an admiration for the sufferings endured by occasional Christian martyrs.

The Endangered Body 1: The Symbolic Interpretation of Illness

From the plague sent by Apollo in *Iliad* Bk. 1, through Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* to late-antique interpretations of the Justinianic plague (Stathakopoulos 2007: 109—10), the option of interpreting widespread illness as a divine or daimonic response to human fault remained an essential feature of the Greek *imaginaire* (Parker 1983: 235–56; Lloyd 2003). The same explanatory option was perhaps even more important in relation to individuals and their households; for those on the land, that is, the great majority of the population, the notion of "ego" included all members of the household, not excluding the cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. At first one would attempt to use the local remedies and pharmacopoeia; if they failed, other possibilities had to be considered. Fatalism was always an option, as was neighborly malice (i.e., witchcraft, the evil eye). But especially psychological ailments, depression, anxiety, and above all epilepsy, were immediately suspected to be caused by daimonic intervention. Such a diagnosis might be supported by the consultation of an oracle, the implication being that the questioner would then know which deity he or she had fallen foul of. Purificatory remedies, and professional purifiers, abounded (Parker 1983: 207–34).

As I have pointed out, the symbolic interpretation of illness encourages the practice of anamnesis: did I fail to observe pollution rule X when I went to temple Y? Failure to fulfil a vow was another obvious explanation: one of the fourth-century BCE *iamata* (miraculous cures) at Epidauros relates that Hermon of Thasos was cured of his blindness by Asklepios but failed to pay his dues (*iatra*) so the god punished him by causing him to go blind again (stela B §22 = LiDonnici 1995: 100–1, B2). The most explicit source material for the institutionalization of this pattern are the so-called confession texts from a relatively small area of western Asia Minor (Petzl 1994; see also Chapter 30). These texts operate on the basis of a standard narrative-pattern, in which illness, often blindness, lameness or some gynaecological trouble, is read – evidently at the instance of the local temple, which offered divinatory services as required – as a sign of divine displeasure (see Figure 15.2). The procedure of reconciliation with the god, which involved a public declaration of one's fault, to be inscribed where possible on a stela, brought a cure (Gordon 2004). Thus Antonia, daughter of Antonius of Kula, dedicates a stela to Apollo of Boza "because I entered the (temple) courtyard in an impure garment; because I have been punished, I have made a confession and set up a (stela of) thanksgiving, since I have been healed" (Petzl 1994, no. 43). This system of publicity through the temple is merely a local variant of the symbolic interpretation of disease, one that explicitly invokes the gods' perpetual awareness of human wrong-doing and implicitly the role of individual anamnesis in connecting religious faults with disease (Chaniotis 2004).

The Endangered Body 2: Cursing

Human malignity, whether in the form of witchcraft or the evil eye, was always in antiquity one possible explanation for physical and especially psychological ill-health, as long as the symptoms followed an "irregular" or "unusual" pattern. With the spread of literacy,

Figure 15.2 A typical example of a "confession stela", addressed to "Zeus from Twin Oaks", dated 202/3 CE. 91 × 47.5 × 5 cm. Menophila had promised to offer a votive tablet (*pinax*) after being punished by the god, evidently in having trouble walking. Menophila procrastinated, and her sister Iulia now erects a stela on her behalf (*SEG* 54 [2004] 1255). Courtesy of Professor M.H. Sayar.

verbal imprecation addressed to an underworld deity such as Hermes or Persephone could be flanked by the more permanent device of a text inscribed on a hard-wearing but inscribable surface, such as lead. In the highly fraught world of Athenian litigation, especially in the fourth century BCE, the idea was picked up enthusiastically as a means of defending litigants, as they saw it, against the unscrupulous lies and distortions of their opponents. Given the size and boisterousness of Athenian juries, those involved in private litigation might easily be intimidated or "dumb-struck": the curses typically play upon this possibility in order to prevent the opponents, especially the witnesses, from speaking. To that end they developed an "attack scheme", from head to foot, but mainly concentrating on the tongue as the medium of speech, the mind (*psychê*) that directs it,

and the heart that inspires the malice of litigation (Gordon 2000: 257–63). Later, Hellenistic and imperial curses develop the "body-scheme" to a high degree, such that the naming of body parts becomes an end in itself, an exercise to accumulate rhetorical force (Versnel 1998); one of the finest examples is a series of five late-Republican erotic texts in Latin found at the Porta Salaria in Rome and now in the Johns Hopkins University Museum, listing thirty-five different parts (*CIL* 1^2 2520). In such cases, the stereotypical signs of having been "caught" by witchcraft – obscure, irregular pains, especially abdominal, a feeling of weakness, lack of energy –have been specified, multiplied and assigned organic form. The association between sickness, anxiety and cursing is constantly thematized by prayers for justice, or curses against thieves, as in a text from Pagans Hill in Somerset addressed to the Romano-British god Mercury: "do not let them be healthy, or drink, or eat, or sleep or have healthy children if they do not bring this (property) of mine to your shrine" (*AE* 1982: 448).

Conclusion

"Temporary deprivation" is not a recognized topic in the study of ancient religion. That non-recognition means one is free to set the agenda. The sub-title of this chapter, "rules and meanings", provides a grid through which one can read different ways in which the body was instrumentalized in antiquity to generate subjective experiences in the production of "fit" worshippers, for everyday as well as for extra-ordinary religious practice. From the standpoint of "lived religion", the endangered body is an especially rewarding theme.

Guide to Further Reading

Burkert (1987) is the most important critical study of the term "mystery cults", and essential reading. Burkert (2004) offers an excellent survey of the archaeological evidence for different types of initiation. Garrison (2010) contains several essays on ancient (religious) interpretations of illness. In relation to a classic distinction in the history of religion, Kindt (2012: 90–122) argues that we need to stop using "religion" and "magic" as a contrastive pair. Parker (1983) is a masterly account of notions of purity in Archaic and Classical Greek religion, while Parker (2004) offers a helpful introduction to the value for the historian of this (rather loose) category of inscriptions. Versnel (2002) emphasizes the use of the idea of divine anger as a strategy to obtain redress. He explains and defends the term "prayer for justice" that he developed in the 1980s in Versnel (2010).

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PART IV

Creating Spaces of Experiences

CHAPTER 16

At Home

Kimberly Bowes

Religious experience in the ancient home has often been termed "private" religion. The tendency to equate the home with private space, and thus home-based ritual with private ritual, is hard to avoid, for the modern idea of "home" as refuge from work and the pressures of public life is synonymous with the "private". And yet the tendency to label ancient domestic religion "private" presents considerable problems. Ancient houses turn out not to be "private" at all but permeable to all kinds of non-family persons while, conversely, the "public" religion of temple, synagogue and church affected domestic practices in complex ways. In most of the periods considered here, textual information on domestic practices has been privileged over material remains, in many cases reinforcing the notion of a public/private binary: Roman legalese describing the division between *sacra publica* and *sacra privata*, a single Greek text that insists the worship of Zeus Ktesios was attended only by immediate family – all seem to indicate a separate place for "private", presumably home-based, religious rites.

This chapter describes the archaeologies of domestic rituals in classical Greek, Roman, Early Christian and Jewish households. In doing so, it relies principally on material culture to outline the kinds of spaces, communities and activities that comprised religiosity in the home. It argues that, like the home itself, ancient Mediterranean domestic religion was not "private" in any modern sense of the term. It encompassed communities that extended far beyond the nuclear family; it referenced and often imitated rituals carried out in communal forums; and in some periods, it was situated in spaces designed to be part of the home's outward-looking status apparatus was, by modern definitions, quite public. This essay will also explore the ways in which the home helped to shape religious impulses and activities that were particular to the home itself. By paying careful attention to the physical remains and spaces of domestic rituals, it will examine how the individuality of family life and house space gave rise to idiosyncratic, individualized practices and how the imitation of public rituals in domestic space might involve important

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changes to those rituals. Ancient worship at home, it will be shown, was not "private", but it often bore the unmistakable, and often individualized mark of the home and the family.

Finding Religion at Home

Finding the material traces of religion in the home is challenging at every level. Indeed, the first problem is one of levels – walls levels, which are typically preserved to foundation height or just above in most archaeological sites. If the house shrines of Pompeii and Ephesus are any indication, much house-based ritual could have been centered in wall niches, placed some 1 meter or more above the ground. These levels are missing in the vast majority of ancient house sites and with them we miss the potentially richest, or at least most durable, source for domestic practices. Large masonry altars, significant sacrificial deposits or other large-scale evidence of cult are relatively rare in domestic contexts, a fact which is itself worthy of comment (see below) but which also makes identification difficult.

Archaeologist of religion Timothy Insoll has suggested that all material culture has the potential to be usefully categorized as "religious" (2004). This is particularly true in domestic contexts: Are the bird-bath shaped basins, or louters, found in Greek houses necessarily used for the rituals of purification and pre-nuptial bathing, as described in the sources? Or were they just early versions of sinks? If we follow the Roman textual sources, the entire home is a sacred space, with a titular deity guarding the threshold, the door panels, even the household broom. Reading "religion" in domestic spaces and artifacts is tricky, not least because the home is a space where, as will be argued below, the intentions and agency of individuals and families might transform everyday objects and spaces into sacred ones; at some moments, the louter was a sacred vessel used to wash away the household *miasma* or pollution caused by death or birth; at others, it was just a sink. Individual or familial religious intention was composed of a mélange of cultural norms shared by their society, by particular family traditions and by the intentions of individuals – the latter two of which are hard, if not impossible to recover archaeologically.

We should thus expect not only difficulty in parsing the "religious" in domestic archaeology, but should also expect more than the usual variety in every aspect of religious expression, from the deities worshipped to sacred orientation. Archaeologists of religion have naturally assumed that shared cultural norms and the repetitive quality of ritual produce a repetitive, identifiable material footprint (cf. Renfrew 1985): pagan altars are placed before temples, Mithraic sanctuaries have facing feasting couches, Christian churches are oriented east or west, and so on. In the home, the need for religious expression to reflect the individual family yielded far more variety in both practice and its material expression. The challenge of the archaeologist is to trace the commonalities that allow us to identify shared domestic religious practices, but also to allow for potentially enormous variation.

The case of Pompeii provides a useful illustration. The houses of Pompeii, preserved in many cases up to second-floor level, contain dozens of examples of domestic shrines. Often painted with images of two dancing youthful gods, identified as the Lares or household-hearth gods, a togate figure identified as the familial Genius or ancestral

spirit, and occasionally holding small statuettes of these and other deities, these shrines have been termed *lararia* – a neologism used to describe what is held to be a normative form of Roman domestic religion, dedicated to the gods of the hearth and home. More careful readings of these shrines, however, have noted huge variety– in what Roman authors thought the Lares represented, in what other deities were also represented, and in the location of these shrines – found in atria, kitchens, hallways, and gardens. Outside central Italy the variety of domestic practice expands. It is often assumed that all "Roman" houses, be they in Britain or Syria, should also have contained a domestic shrine for worship of the Lares. Yet even in provinces as "Romanized" as Spain or southern Gaul, statuettes of the Lares are relatively rare. In Egypt statuettes of the baby Horus, or Harpocrates, are commonly found in houses along with a multitude of other traditional Egyptian deities (Nachtergael 1985). While the so-called *lararia* of Pompeii are a starting point, they represent only the tip of a vast and complicated iceberg of domestic practice, whose variation was echoed in the individual practices of individual houses.

Reading Domestic Space and its Rituals

Ancient Mediterranean housing exhibited enormous diversity, from the rabbit warren of Palestinian villages to the high-rise apartments of the Roman city. What almost these all shared, however, was an open courtyard space which served as the central organizing unit, admitting light and air. Most houses also had a separate space that contained the household cooking fires or hearth. It is in these two spaces – the courtyard and the kitchen/hearth – that much ritual activity was also centered, either in actual fact or notionally. But ancient houses also shared a startling mutability in the function of rooms: rooms that might serve as dining spaces in one instance might be used for storage in another. As the functions of rooms in ancient houses might change according to need, so too might ritual activity take place in any number of spaces.

The majority of classical Greek houses presented a fairly closed face to the passerby. Entrance often took place through a narrow corridor or other device which limited views inside, and there were few exterior windows. Once inside, however, the space gave on to a central courtyard that served as the central organizing unit. Rooms might be shielded from that courtyard by a masking porch but, in general, the courtyard served as a kind of panopticon into the other domestic spaces. Portability of activities and changeability of given space's function depending on need and time of day seem to have characterized these modest houses. The one exception was the *andron* where the all-male symposium or drinking was held, set on one side of the courtyard and often provided with benches.

The archaeology on domestic religion from classical Greece is particularly thin and the little scholarship is heavily reliant on textual evidence. The combined evidence of finds combined with texts suggests the courtyard was one of the main spaces of ritual practice. It is often there that, as in the well-preserved town Olynthos, the few preserved stone or masonry altars are found and very often the stone louters which, as described above, might have either ritual or ordinary uses (Cahill 2002). The textual sources specifically mention Zeus Ktesios, or the Zeus of Possessions, and Zeus Herkeios, the Zeus of the Courtyard, as having been worshipped in courtyard spaces. The courtyard was the space most visible to the rest of the house, and thus in which the greatest number of inhabitants

might be involved. While Isaeus (8.16) describes courtyard rituals to Zeus Ktesios as explicitly prohibiting outsiders, other texts find non-family members present (Antiphon 1.15–9), suggesting worshipping communities might vary. In any case, the use of the courtyard, and indeed the fact that Zeus Herkeios took his name from that space, and that an Athenian's claims to legitimate citizenship were made with reference to this cult (Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians* 55), suggests that the courtyard space could, in those moments, serve as a cultic synecdoche for the family itself.

The Roman-period houses of Jewish families share a ritual emphasis on the courtyard, but within a spatial and social ambit so distinct that it forces us to realize how much space impacted ritual and ritual communities. Behind a closed façade the village houses of the Galilee open into an enclosed central courtyard. Yet many rooms were placed at some remove from the courtyard, and virtually no sight lines permitted views into adjacent rooms. These houses were rarely discrete units, but ran together with neighboring properties to such an extent that it is rarely possible to tell where one house-unit ends and another begins. The small courtyards around which they were set were shared spaces for baking, weaving, and agro-industrial activity. As Cynthia Baker has observed (2002), the Jewish home complex was a kind of anopticon, where individuals and family groups sharing a common courtyard could feel shielded from communal gaze while monitoring the communal courtyard. That courtyard was often the site – or at times the entry point – for the purpose-built ritual bath or *mikveh*, used for ceremonies of ritual purification after menstruation, sex, birth and death (Meyers 2003). Like the louter of the Greek house, *mikva'ot* could simply be portable baths, but wealthier homes built permanent ones, often set just off or within the common courtyard. The fact that these spaces of ritual purification were built within view of the family or multi-family aggregate unit speaks to the importance of the communal gaze in enforcing domestic ritual purification.

In many other areas of the Roman world, however, to stand outside a house was to be asked to look into its very heart. The careful sightlines established between entrance portal, the atrium and the colonnaded peristyle garden beyond provided a carefully controlled view through the entire house. Houses laid out in this fashion, which can be found from Pompeii through Britain and North Africa, are the material expression of one aspect of Roman self-fashioning – the transparent individual with nothing to hide. As Livius Drusus said to his architect, "You should apply your skills to arranging my house so that whatever I do should be visible to everyone" (Velleius Paterculus 2.14.3). Such transparency, of course, was a carefully crafted and socially acceptable lie: political scandal was hatched in homes just as surely as the sightlines of those homes only provided a tantalizing, carefully controlled glimpse of what their owners wished outsiders to see. However, this habit describes a desire for self-presentation that impacted domestic ritual activities as well. Many household shrines were located in atria or courtyard spaces (Bakker 1994; cf. Fröhlich 1991). From Pompeii, the house of the Obellius Fermus provides a good example. Immediately upon entering the atrium to the right was a small built shrine. The tall base and open sides made its interior visible, where three statuettes were on display – a herm and two male busts whose identity was uncertain, but must have represented deities important to that family. A miniature altar, a coin and an incense burner were also found inside, while below in a niche was a lamp. The shrine was thus visible and accessible to any of the house's visitors, the statuettes advertising the family's favored gods, while the ritual implements were likewise on display and ready for use.

But courtyards, permeable or impermeable to public gaze, were not the only spaces of ritual practice and religious importance in ancient houses. The hearth was an ancient locus of ritual activity, and in Bronze Age houses the great central hearth may have served as one of the principal loci of religious activity. By the Greco-Roman period, the importance of the hearth is above all antiquarian, a memory of ancestral practice and of deities associated with an ancient past. Hestia, for instance, is the Greek goddess of the hearth and household, and is credited with having invented houses! The Lares, Roman gods of hearth and home, were likewise regarded as ancient even by Republican-period writers, who could not make up their mind as to the gods' origins and functions (Orr 1978). The physical traces of these hearth gods, while fragmentary, suggest both the continued importance of the idea of hearth and its transmutations into more "modern" settings.

In the Classical Greek house, rituals of birth, marriage and death are said to be set at the hearth: the *amphidromia*, where a newborn baby is circled around the hearth at a run, may have been tied to Hestia, but in any case uses the hearth as synecdoche for home/family to which the new babe was now integrated (Rose 1957: 10). The bridal procession began and ended at the hearths of the bride/groom, respectively while, at least in some communities, sweepings from the home were deposited on the hearth as a dedication to Hestia in order to purify the miasma of death. Yet these traditions of hearth-based ritual were carried out in homes where permanent hearths had become a thing of the long-distant past. The majority of Greeks homes had no permanent built hearth, but probably used portable braziers (Jameson 1990). In Olynthos, where permanent cooking fires are more common, these were set within a closet-like flue – a cramped space not ideal for the rituals. The finds from these flues have yielded ashes, broken ceramics and animal bones – waste which might equally be domestic or ritual (Cahill 2002: Chapter 4.4.2). Built hearths are sometimes found in these rooms, but yield no cooking pots or burned bones, pointing to other uses – heat or perhaps ritual. Given that portable braziers were probably the most common kind of "hearth", we must imagine these rituals were portable as well.

To an even greater degree, the Roman Lares were dissociated from their traditional hearth. As noted above, shrines painted with images of the Lares are found in some Pompeian atria, where their veneration could take place in an appropriately public setting and contribute to the status apparatus of their owners. More common, however, is their appearance in kitchens: the majority of all identifiable shrines in Pompeii and Herculaneum are located in kitchens and other service quarters (Fröhlich 1991; see Figure 16,1). Yet unlike in Greek households, these kitchen spaces were overwhelmingly used by slaves and thus we should imagine that much hearth-based ritual in Pompeian homes was practiced by slaves. Indeed, one kitchen shrine may depict a whole *collegium* or voluntary association of slaves and ex-slaves, parading before the *Lar*. The kitchen as ritual space, then, actually represents a distinct part of the extended household – the family slaves – who, at least in Pompeii, seem to have adopted an important role in the family's religious life (Foss 1997).

Courtyards and kitchens are perhaps the quintessential household spaces. As an important reminder that the ancient "house" and its cultic apparatus need not even be bounded by walls, it is useful to consider the rural Roman villa. The term "villa" comprised a (frequently large) house, its disparate, often non-contiguous parcels of land, and

the people who worked that land, an assortment of slaves, tenant farmers, seasonal workers and overseers. The religious spaces of the estate thus extended from house to fields. The boundaries of the estate were set by the ritual placement of property markers, each consecrated with a sacrifice; a *lustratio* ritual purified the land by sacralizing its boundaries. An inscription and crude herm to Jupiter Terminus, Jupiter of Boundaries, found near Amelia in Italy, provides a rare glimpse of how such boundaries were ritualized and overseen by divine agency. In France, Spain and Britain, freestanding, often large, temples were a frequent sight on villa lands. The location of these temples, typically some distance from the villa buildings and often on access road, likewise points to a worshipping population comprised of the estate working population and passersby, and to attempts to claim the spaces of the estate via the gods. While cultic artifacts from these temples are often sparse, the most common finds – rough votive altars and terracotta images of Venus-type figures – describe the rituals of the estate's rural peasantry. The Roman villa as both physical space and human unit was thus given ritual form.

Whether permeable or impermeable to the outside gaze, most ancient houses bore some sacred protection around their boundaries. Recesses near the street-side door of many classical Greek houses have been identified as shrines to Hermes and/or Hekate (Jameson 1990); over the doors of Pompeiian houses is often found an image of a phallus; and on the windows and lintels of the late Roman houses of the Syrian uplands are inscribed prayers and curses – invoking pagan and Christian deities alike – to protect the inhabitants within against the evil eye (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989). All these attest a concern with the boundaries of the house, and thus to what public scrutiny might also carry with it – jealousy, thievery and covetousness. These were imagined not simply as social problems but as divine attacks that could cause grain to spoil, babies to miscarry and other grave matters of life and death. The points at which the house did its important work as conveyer of status and identity – the windows, doors and entry-spaces – were also the lowest points of its defenses and it is here that the majority of such apotropaic imagery and inscriptions are found. Hermes and Hekate were guardians of boundaries, protecting against harmful incursion; the phallus' raw power fought off evil; while the image of an eye attacked with spears might actually beat off the evil eye (cf. Gell 1998). These protections alert us to the dangers that might accompany the public gaze and to the importance ancient people credited to the house as a sacred, protective unit.

Public Religion and Domestic Ritual

While the house may have had a protective envelope, its sacred world was never particular to itself. As discussed above, "private" religion is a difficult term to apply to rituals that were very often in dialogue with rituals taking place in communal contexts outside the home. Indeed, it is this near constant referencing to communal religion that has led some scholars to dismiss domestic cult as a separate object of inquiry. Again, attention to the physical evidence for domestic ritual is helpful here, as it reveals both the close connections with collective, "public" rituals and also the subtle and important ways in which householders make those rituals their own (cf. Smith 1998).

The Greek home is an interesting case in point, as recent arguments have relegated all ritual therein to simply an extension of "polis religion" (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000;

cf. Faraone 2008). Although the evidence is often one of silence, there are noteworthy differences between polis rites and domestic ones, the principal of which is animal sacrifice. While some texts describe domestic animal sacrifice (Herodotus 6.67.3–69), above all to Zeus Ktesios, one wonders how frequent and large-scale animal sacrifice in homes really was. It is only in Olynthus that permanent altars are found and these are rare, while small-scale, portable altars are far more common. The relatively confined spaces in the home, and the absence of evidence for ritual deposits, ash pyres or other leavings all leave the impression of small-scale rites, using small animals and probably a predominance of non-meat sacrifices of grain and cakes, the pouring of libations and other gestures. This shift of material and scale matters; much ink has been spilled on the centrality of animal sacrifice to the polis' collective relationship with the gods. If domestic ritual was largely a bloodless one, it represented a subtly different set of human-divine relationships. It is also the case that the Greek domestic deities seem to have been rarely represented in human form, or at least we have very few divine images from Classical Greek houses. From the possible herms at the house doors to Zeus Ktesios represented as a pot, it not too far a stretch to suggest that the anthropomorphism that dominated in many public temples may have given way somewhat in the home.

The Roman relationship between public and domestic religion was similarly complex. Consider the case of the Roman house shrines of Pompeii. Their form – small columned structures atop a plinth – seems to echo that of the public temples. But they generally lack altars, have no interior equivalent of a cella, and bear much closer resemblances to what little we know of neighborhood shrines on street corners to which the Lares were also attached. That is, there were many "publics" which might be referenced in the home, and in this case, it is useful to imagine the relationship as a continuum between public and domestic rather than the public "original" and its domestic referent..

In the case of Christian buildings inserted into homes, it is only at the end of our period, in the sixth century CE, that they occasionally take the form of public basilicas. The so-called Theater House in Ephesus has all of those forms in miniature – a single apse with rows of clergy benches, a tiny sanctuary and miniature altar. And yet, as with the Greek house, the references to public rites are reshaped by the small spaces of the home. The clergy benches are shrunk past their usefulness, while the sanctuary barrier could have no purpose in space with such a small community. Indeed, it is rather unlikely the space could have accommodated a typical Eucharistic ritual with its emphasis on processions. Rather, the family in this instance seems to have appropriated and miniaturized the language of public church architecture to stand in place of those rituals: instead of the full panoply of the public mass, they have a stand-in in stone (Bowes forthcoming).

At the same time that the monumental, public religion might be miniaturized and readapted for domestic rites, the most banal household objects were often mobilized for ritual use. Indeed, as described above, one of the many challenges in finding domestic religion is parsing the ritual from the everyday. For the ritual apparatus of the household were everyday objects – choice food items, pitchers, plates, lamps and jars – which in moments of religious intention took on ritual power.

Careful excavation has revealed some tantalizing examples. Athanasius claims that the image of Zeus Ktesios is made of a *kadiskos*, a small jar, stuffed with food and garlanded with wool. Not only is this domestic Zeus radically different from his great anthropomorphic statues in the public temples, but his image is literally that of a storage vessel,

that is, he embodies his own nature as god of possessions. In Nea Halos, in Boetia, a vessel was found sunk below the floor next to a built hearth and contained two snake figurines (Ault 2006: 77). The snake, as described in more detail below, has an ancient association with households and household cult and may have become another symbol of Zeus Ktesios. Thus, the Boetian deposit may not simply have been a votive deposit to Zeus; in its humble everyday form, it may have been Zeus himself.

The rites that protected the fabric of the house, noted above through reliefs and inscriptions, might also empower everyday objects. In a number of Roman villas in northern Spain and costal Gaul were found deposits of birds and birds' eggs, typically placed in pots and then placed either under the door or at some distance from the villa buildings, seemingly at some sort of perimeter (Fabre, Forest, and Kotarba 2000; Casas and Ruíz De Arbulo 1997). While contemporary textual evidence usually finds birds used in rituals to the dead, these deposits seem to be manning the boundaries of the living, calling upon the apotropaic power of both living and unborn birds to protect the homes of humans. The building of a house also seems to have been an occasion at which ritual protection was called down into everyday objects. At Lullingstone villa in southern Britain, a whole series of deposits – from a horse skull carefully laid in straw ticking and cones from a Mediterranean Umbrella Pine to an assemblage of ceramic fragments placed inside a wall – ritually marked the moment of construction (Meates 1979). Such foundation deposits, which can be comprised of anything from pots to coins, are hard to interpret: like the bird deposits, they probably have an apotropaic function, but they also mark a moment in time – construction or boundary marking – and thus, like some of the other domestic rites we have examined above, serve to ritualize major family moments.

Perhaps the most potent everyday object in the family's arsenal of ritual power was the lamp. From humble terracotta to elaborate bronze versions, lamps were both the major source of light in houses which, outside the courtyard, offered very little in the way of natural light (Ellis 2007). They were also a frequent ritual implement, particularly in those rituals that marked the end of the day. In Greek and Roman houses, evenings were marked by the lighting of "the beloved lamps" and short greetings to Sol and other deities. In Jewish houses, the lighting of the lamps on Friday marked the starting of the Shabat. Christians continued these traditions, lighting lamps and crossing themselves or offering prayers to mark the setting of the sun and ushering in the "light of Christ" (Bowes 2008). It is tempting to assume that lamps that bear religious imagery – a cross, a menorah or Sol – might have served in these rituals, but they may have equally simply been used for daily functions, or both. Lamps were also a common accompaniment to those particular rituals of family members. In the house of consul Attalos in Athens, an image of the consul was labeled as "servant to the goddess" beside which stood a niche, presumably containing the image of the goddess herself. Before this niche were the remains many lamps lit in honor of the householder's chosen deity (Nilsson 1960: 206).

Families, Past and Present

As has been suggested above, the rituals that took place in the home can be understood as the expression of the household itself. As such, the household they ritually stood for was, in most cases, not limited to its living inhabitants but embraced the dead as well.

This ritual reintegration of dead ancestors took place in almost all instances by proxy; unlike prehistoric Mexican and Anatolian societies where the dead were literally buried in the house, most ancient Mediterranean households referenced ancestors by symbolic means. The toga-wearing Roman Genius seems to be the generalized embodiment of the family's male ancestors. The presence of a snake in both some Greek household ritual contexts and in Pompeiian household shrines seems also to reference the ancestors at second hand; thought to be a reference to the underworld, either generally or as chthonic Zeus, the snake, far from being the ill-omen of Christian scripture is the joiner of living and dead families (Rose 1957).

One of the richest and most illustrative examples of this symbolic integration of dead and living comes from one of the terrace houses in Ephesus (Quatember 2003; Thür 2005: 40–2, 97, 424–6). Adjacent to the vestibule and accessible from the courtyard was a small chamber, progressively ornamented with three grave reliefs, depicting the deceased reclining and feasting. One of these reliefs had been in the home for at least one of its previous phases when it had hung in the vestibule, and it was now refitted into this room. Along another wall of the room a large image of a snake, sporting a beard and a crest, slithers by, while on the floor were found two large incense burners. A third relief may have hung in the new vestibule. In this wealthy, second century CE home, then, we see the careful collection of family grave monuments, their curation and display in a prominent place in the home, and their association with the snake, either an *agathos daemon* – a kind of spirit of the place (Vetters 1978) – or as has been suggested in the case of Zeus Ktetios, an image of chthonic, underworld deities (Nilsson 1954; Rose 1957). As the reliefs bear no names, we can only assume they were immediately recognizable to family members, who continued to collect them through several living generations.

Another remarkable instance of connection between families past and present is again in the villa of Lullingstone (Meates 1979). In a basement room in the second century, a small niche was built to house a shrine to the nymphs. Later, the same room received two finely carved, but worn male busts – seemingly heirloom images of family members, before which small pots, one of which was already a century old, were placed for offerings. In the later fourth century, the room above this basement shrine was converted to use as a Christian church. A single rectangular room oriented to the east, the room was covered with bright frescoes, including images of the Christian chi-rho, and on the western wall what appears to be an image of the family themselves, arrayed in fine attire, their hands raise in prayer in imitation of the living occupants in the same space. Extraordinarily, it would appear that dedications to the ancestors in the basement room continued during this time, as new pots were placed in the floor before the now very old busts. The Christian rituals of the family above were literally juxtaposed with the veneration of families past down below.

Guide to Further Reading

There are very few guides to the religious archaeology of classical Greek homes, and one must ferret out the remains from archaeological studies (Cahill 2002) or textual studies (Faraone 2008; Boedeker 2008). Still useful are the older studies of Nilsson (1954) and Rose (1957). For Roman houses the data is much richer: detailed studies of the house

shrines of Pompeii (Fröhlich 1991; Foss 1997), Ostia (Bakker 1994), and Roman villas (Ferdiére 1988: 251–2; Bowes 2006) are good introductions. The textual data has now been usefully recast in recent discussions (Bodel 1997, 2008) although the old surveys (Wissowa 1912; Orr 1978) remain useful. For Jewish households, the archaeology of domestic cult has seen no comprehensive study, although the *mikva'ot* have been surveyed typically in studies of gender (Meyers 2003). Again, the best view is the first-hand troll through the archaeology (Hirschfeld 1995). Christian domestic archaeology is also another new field, for which the data is just being collected (Bowes 2008; forthcoming).

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CHAPTER 17

Gardens

Richard Neudecker

Introduction

To show "in what modes hath bosomed in their breasts that awe of gods, which hallows in all lands groves of the gods", was the intent of Lucretius (5.73–5). For as Pliny (*Natural History* 12.3–5) tells us, the forests have always been "the temples of the gods", and "we feel ourselves inspired to adoration, not less by the sacred groves and their very stillness, than by the statues of the gods, resplendent as they are with gold and ivory". Only in mythical retrospective did evocative religious experiences of nature take place in an entirely untouched wilderness: in lived reality, they always happened in a more-or-less ordered environment, in nature tamed by human hands, with clipped trees, manicured lawns and planted flowers, with irrigation channels and expanded grottos, planned groves and orchards and peristyle gardens designed by architects. All these creative acts result in what we would call a garden or a park, and all these phenomena are hence treated here under the heading of "gardens".

Modern concepts – the English concept of the "sacred grove", but also the German "der heilige Hain", which is a phrase and concept shaped by German Romanticism – are naturally quite far away from ancient associations. In this ancient understanding of the world order, the fundamental action that stood behind all sacred groves and gardens was that of "cutting out" a specific part of the world and appropriating it as a sanctuary.

To a religious person, the sacred character of these select sites was quite normal, as was the latent sanctity of all nature. The great importance of groves among sacred sites is mirrored by the desire of all ancient sanctuaries for open spaces, which were almost always the sites of events far more important than those that happened in interiors, which were mainly considered houses of the gods. The ways in which these acts of demarcation and appropriation took place and their consequences are the subjects of this chapter.

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

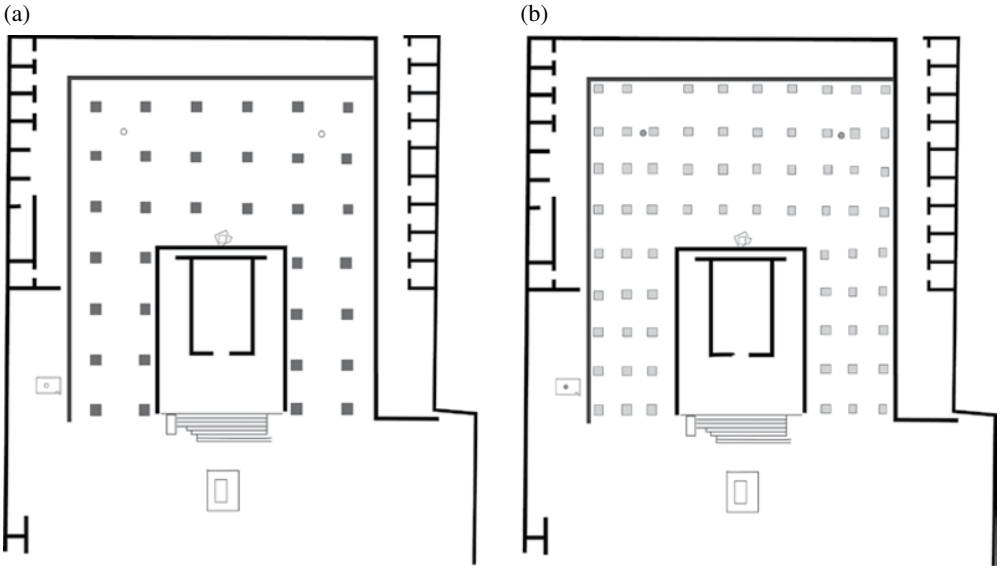

Figure 17.1 Gabii, sanctuary of Juno, with pits for the trees of the first grove A and the second grove B. Drawing courtesy of M. Schuetzenberger, DAI Rome.

Definitions

Unfortunately, the ephemeral nature of these sites causes them to be largely intangible in the archaeological record. The interpretation of what does remain is further complicated by the fact that ancient authors hardly ever provide exact information on this subject, limiting themselves to general statements and tantalizing allusions. This ancient information was collected in the nineteenth century and has been the subject of much debate ever since (Thédenat 1904; Nilsson 1967; Scheid 1993; Dubourdieu and Scheid 2000). It seems clear that it cannot provide clear differentiations between, say, sacred and profane gardens, between sanctuaries with gardens and sanctuaries without trees. Some of the contradictions in the literary sources are also due to the fact that the gardens of sanctuaries can vanish and develop far more easily than their architecture. Further insecurity is generated by the large numbers of different terms used in this context: in Greek we find κῆπος (garden), ὄρχατος (orchard) and παράδεισος (animal park) as well as the most commonly used ἄλσος for sacred grove, which need not, however, always have been sacred: Pausanias' travelogue mentions forty "groves", only five of which are explicitly marked as "sanctuaries" (Jacob 1993). We can imagine the dilemma that faced Strabo (14.1.5) at Didyma where there was a splendid grove that was partly in and partly outside the walls of the temple compound, which even included a village.

The Latin term "*lucus*" is every bit as difficult (Scheid 1993: 556). It can be interpreted as referring to a clearing in a wood, if one adheres to the Late Antique definition given by Isidorus (*Origins* 14.8.30): according to his home-made etymology, *lucus* is a dark clearing thickly surrounded by trees, taking its name from the lamps used there for religious purposes. Livy (24.3.4) similarly describes the grove of Hera at Kroton as a clearing "enclosed by dense woods and tall fir trees". A "*lucus nemoralis*", on the other hand, may

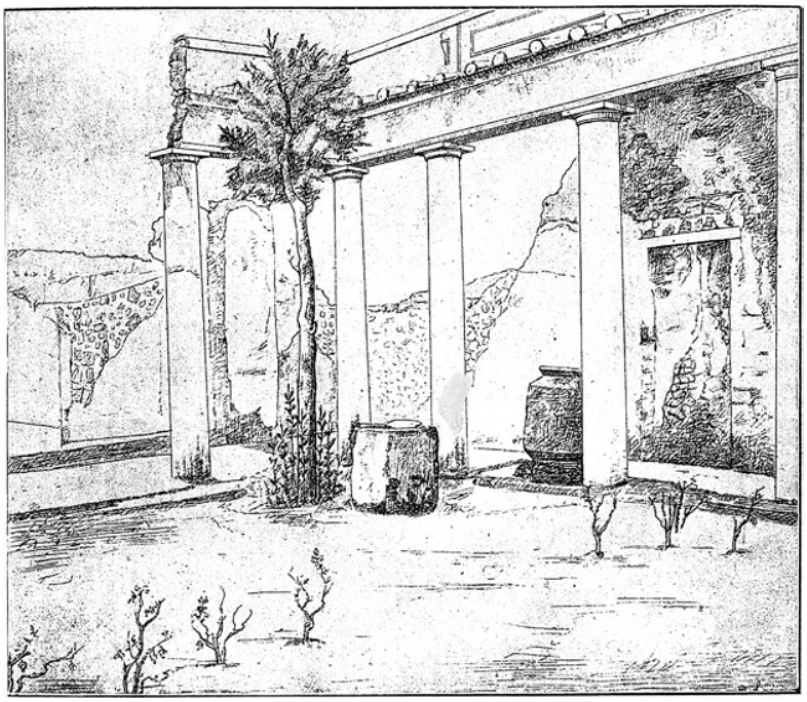

Figure 17.2 Pompeii, House of Julius Polybius (IX 13, 1-3), peristyle garden with altar under sacred tree, reconstructed on the basis of root remains. Anonymous drawing in Notizie degli scavi di antichità 1910, page 468.

also have referred to a specifically delimited part of a wood, given that Servius differentiates between untamed *silva*, ordered *nemus*, and *lucus*, which he describes as "a number of trees with religion" (*Commentary on the Aeneid* 1.310). As a designation, "*lucus*" could even continue to be applied to a sanctuary that had only a single tree or even none at all, making it "naked" in the words of Strabo (9.2.33), who admonishes the terminological inaccuracy of poets, but without reference to religious or even stylistic concerns. Furthermore, "*lucus*" is undoubtedly applied also to groves that were not part of sanctuaries. These ancient incongruencies are further exacerbated by modern authors seeking to distinguish between a dark and untamed Italic *lucus* and a cheerful and light Greek *nemus* (Grimal 1969). Ancient conceptions of the sacred grove thus emerge as non-exclusive and did not have to be sharply distinguished from other sacred and natural sites.

Rights and Duties

The regulations found in sacral law can help to provide a more accurate definition of the sacred garden, given that the establishment of precise property borders was a fundamental interest of every sanctuary (Pasqualini 1975: 1970–2). The designated plot of land was cut out of the all-encompassing, latent property of the gods by means of a ritual *effatio*, and was then fenced in order to enact its transfer into its new sacred use. This need to

secure property borders was so strong that, while inscriptions could ignore cult buildings, they consistently mention fences, walls and gates (Coarelli 1993; De Cazanove 2000).

Before this transformation could occur, a grove had to be partially cleared in order to create a clearing. In order to reimburse the divine beings occupying the site, a *piaculum* was needed, an atonement sacrifice in form of a pig. The prayer that Cato (*On Agriculture* 139) records for this purpose is accordingly addressed to "god or goddess, whoever this here is sacred to". Admittedly, the occasion here is the regular removal of unwanted wild growth, but the instruction undoubtedly shows that every wood was a *sacrum*. Also in sanctuaries, trees had to be trimmed regularly, necessitating regular atonement. While branches could be cut off for sacred purposes on certain festive days, felling trees was strictly prohibited. Just like votives and broken pieces of architecture, no branch was allowed to leave the sanctuary (Edlund 1985).

The regulations regarding purity in groves set down in a "*lex de luco sacro*" from Luceria, dated to 315/4 (*CIL* 9.782; Bodel 1986), conform to norms that govern all kinds of sanctuaries. More clearly grove-specific are inscriptions that document a god's ownership of plantations both inside and outside the sanctuary borders. Such texts are usually concerned with lucrative orchards or vineyards that were leased out, for example in late fourth century BCE Thasos, as well as in Sunion and Delphi (Nilsson 1967: 73; Horster 2004: 141, 167–72, 178). Juvenal, however, views the lease of the Roman grove of Egeria to Jews (3.12–6) as arising from the avarice of the communal administration.

Step by step, parts of nature are thus tamed and civilized, culminating in profit-oriented orchards. Sacred "gardens" need to be viewed in the context of these developments. In the beginning, we have nature as the natural habitat of the gods, followed by the subsequent transformation of remarkable natural sites into sacred groves, which then come to be horticulturally designed with planters and flower beds, and finally the appropriation of the sacred grove as a private sacred garden in the Roman villa, accompanied by the development of a literary and artistic discourse on the sacro-idyllic motif that functions as a kind of virtual sacred garden.

Religious Perceptions of Nature

"A grove full of incredibly tall, ancient trees, shutting out a view of the sky by a veil of pleached and intertwining branches, the thick unbroken shade and the seclusion of the spot, will prove to you the presence of a deity and will not a deep cave deeply move your soul by a certain intimation of the existence of god?" is Seneca's description of the impact nature can have on the soul (*Letters* 41.3). The geographer Pomponius Mela (1.13.72–3) explicitly remarks on the beauty of the woodlands around the Corycian cave and thereby confirms that religious perception is tied to visual impressions, explaining why the seat of the gods is atop the most impressive mountain of Greece, Mt. Olympus. In the barren landscape of Greece even deep caves might easily appear as the home of divine beings, but the strongest aura of the divine is always inherent in trees. As a consequence, groves are always sacred. Caution is paramount in walking among the trees, since a god slumbers here or casts his shadow, and Pan and the nymphs can awaken at any moment. Only once an artist's hand has designed and transformed the site can it become a space of interaction between god and man. The most ideal combination of

natural features is found in the groves of nymphs, featuring springs, soft lawns, shade, rustling rushes and sweetly smelling flowers (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.155–62). Man merely contributes the gifts that adorn this idyll. These votives, for example, allow Socrates to realize that a remarkably beautiful spot on the river Ilissos is sacred to the nymphs and Acheloos (Plato, *Phaidros* 230 b–c).

Flowers and Trees

Plenty of running water is the first prerequisite for a permanent garden. The abundance of water in Elis, for example, created more groves than Strabo is willing to enumerate (8.3.12). During his travels in Greece, Pausanias visited the impressive number of 42 groves (Jacob 1993; Pirenne-Delforge 2008: 154–61). For Rome alone, the 30 surviving names of luci, ranging from the *Aesculetum* to the *Querquetulanum*, attest to the large variety of tree types, all of which are recorded in Pliny (*Natural History* 12.3), complete with divine association and potential uses (Stara-Tedde 1905). Many of the trees in sanctuaries are relics of the gods and witnesses of their deeds. Ἄλσος par excellence was the "Altis" at Olympia, where plantains provided shade to visitors and the first olive tree had allegedly been planted by Heracles himself in order to provide the victors' wreaths (Pausanias 15.2). Other shade-giving forest trees are the fir trees in the grove of Hera at Kroton, mentioned above, the elms and pines in the grove of Demeter at Dotion and the cypress trees in the grove of Ganymede and Hebe on the acropolis of Phlious (2.13.3). The cypress grove of Apollo in Daphne near Antioch had a circumference of 80 stades and was thus the size of an impressive forest, but was also famous for its flower beds (Strabo 16.2.6). In Cyrene (Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 5.24), on Cyprus (Strabo 14.6.3) and in the Athenian sanctuary "in the gardens" (Carroll-Spillecke 1989: 24; 34–8), the gardens of Aphrodite were essential in providing the wealth of flowers required for the festive wreaths and garlands that evoked the goddess by their divine scent alone (Pirenne-Delforge 2001). Intoxicating smells also wafted from the parts of the gardens used to grow herbs. Examples include not only the laurel of Apollo in Metapontum (Herodotus 4.5), but also the sesame plants, poppies, mint and myrtle cultivated in the garden of the Graces near Athens (Aristophanes, *Aves* 611–26, 1100). The orchards of Demeter, of Artemis at Skyllus, of Apollo at Gryneion, and of the nymphs (Pausanias 9.24.4) should be understood as fully developed horticultural organizations providing profit margins for tenants and financial returns for the gods (Horster 2004).

In cult practice, many of the less profitable, older trees served as bearers of votive offerings, even though this is difficult to trace in the archaeology. It is, however, difficult to imagine that the seventh- and sixth-century BCE clay pinakes found at the temple of Poseidon at Penteskouphia were not hung on trees (Mylonopoulos 2008: 61–2). In Virgil's poetry, the remains of sacrifices, such as pelts, hair and leather masks, are hung on the trees of a rural sanctuary and playfully dance in the wind as *oscilla* (*Georgics* 2.380–96). Votives that were hung in trees for a very specific occasion were the chains of freed prisoners (Pirenne-Delforge 2008: 156), but also hair and garments discarded as part of *rites de passage* (De Cazanove 1993: 120–2): a lotus tree in Rome came to be designated as *arbor capillata* for precisely this reason (Pliny, *Natural History* 16.235).

The Cave of Pan at Vari

In their modern state, the ancient rural groves of Greece hardly appear as well-tended gardens. Fortunately, inscriptions tell us of horticultural activity and building work done to remarkable natural sites.

The cave of Pan at Vari in Attica is an impressive cave even today (Schörner and Goette 2004). In the late fifth century BCE, a deep-reaching flight of steps was hewn into the rock, which was also shaped into a seated statue and a water basin, as well as shelves for votive reliefs that show the grotto itself and its inhabitants Pan, Hermes and the nymphs. To one side of an altar one can see a rock-cut relief of Archedomos of Thera at work with a pickaxe. According to the inscription, he was a worshipper of the nymphs (nympholeptes) and embellished the grotto at their behest. But the grotto was but one part of a larger rural sanctuary. Another inscription, put up outside, tells us more: "Archedamos, the Theran, planted this garden (κᾶπος) for the nymphs" – a garden that must have lain above the entrance to the cave.

At the entrance of a cave at Pharsalus, fourth-century inscriptions tell us of a certain Pantalkes who also worked the stone of the cave and cultivated the garden in the service of the nymphs and their entourage, but also mention his sense of self-fulfillment in sacred toil (Bonnechere 2001: 34–7).

Caves and Groves in Athens and Rome

The rock of the Athenian acropolis is densely populated with rustic shrines of this kind (Greco 2010: 132–6). Today, they all look quite naked, since gardens and trees require intense care. Also in Rome, the many *luci*, the sacred groves, had long disappeared either in part or entirely, leaving only memories. In his late Republican list of *luci*, Varro accordingly notes that "the felled trees left only their names to these places" (*On the Latin Language* 5.49; 152). Of the more than 30 groves in Rome attested in literary sources only very few still existed in the time of Pliny (mid-first century CE): the myrtle trees of Quirinus (*Natural History* 15.120–1), a few trees in the *lucus* of Juno Lucina on the Cispian Hill, and the Lucus Furrinae in Trastevere (Stara-Tedde 1905; Häuber 2001).

Lucus of Dea Dia Outside Rome

Groves on the outskirts had better chances of survival. One of the oldest and most important, fully revitalized by Augustus, was the grove of Dea Dia on the Via Campana to Ostia (Scheid 1990; Broise and Scheid 1993). It was cared for by the aristocratic Fratres Arvales, the "Brothers of the Fields". Small parts of the sanctuary have been excavated, whilst others can be reconstructed from the inscriptions detailing ritual procedures (*CIL* 6.2023–120). The sanctuary was expanded over the years and in Severan times had been developed into a compound with a circus and baths, cult buildings in the plain and a temple on a hill at the edge of the grove. Today, no trace remains of the grove with its holly oaks and laurel trees. Outside the grove stood an altar, with others made of grass and wood strewn about the area. The main part of the annual festival, celebrated

on moving dates in either May or June, began with the priests ascending to the *lucus*. The brothers entered the grove only on this day of the year and proceeded to atone for their transgression by sacrificing a pig, just as if they had made a new clearing. Afterwards, special cakes were laid out in the temple, and clay vessels were thrown out of the temple entrance and down the path to the grove. Unlike the events in the vale, these actions will have been witnessed or performed by many. Only the atonement sacrifice took place in the grove itself, evidently to make up for the transgression of having to enter it for gardening work. The records also mention numerous fires and their consequences; every dead tree had to be atoned for with a sacrifice. Fallen branches had to be removed, but we also hear of the removal of "a tree that had fallen over in the grove of the goddess Dia due to its age". The lumber was not allowed to leave the grove. Atonement sacrifices even had to be performed when iron tools had to be brought into the grove. These inconvenient complexities and strict rules were instrumental in creating the primal religious profundity needed to convince the participants in the cult that they were actually in contact with the grove's divine owner.

Planting Trees and Bushes in Athens and Gabii

As was mentioned earlier, another form of contact with the deity was the lease of orchards. An inscription dating to 418 BCE records a contract concerning 200 olive trees in the sanctuary of Neleus and Basile at the foot of the Athenian Acropolis. It is possible to reconstruct the grove as a plantation with regularly spaced rows of trees (Travlos 1971: 332–4; Greco 2010: 421).

The temples of various sanctuaries were embedded in geometrically-designed gardens reminiscent of precisely these kinds of meticulously planned plantations. These gardens acquired religious significance due to their constant need for upkeep, provided by the cult. If this need was not met, they soon vanished, as at the Temple of Hephaestus above the Athenian agora. In the early third century BCE, 60 pits had been driven into the rocky ground and then fitted with planters for bushes and an irrigation system (Thompson 1937). Once this system broke down in the late first century CE, the grove was condemned to ruin.

The arrangement of these bushes in rows, two on both the north and the south sides and one on the west side, picked up and continued the rhythm of the temple's colonnade.

Elsewhere, where there were actual trees, their trunks likewise mirrored the architecture and reminded visitors that, long before the construction of porticos, shrines had been shaded by trees laden with votive offerings. The Temple of Juno in the "arva Gabinae Iunonis" (Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.682–3), situated on a rocky hill south of Rome, must have jutted above the tree tops in Antiquity (Lauter 1968; Jiménez 1982; Almagro-Gorbea and Jiménez 1982). Around the temple, 104 rectangular pits were driven into the rock, filling the *area* between the temple and the porticos on three sides; only the front was left clear (fig.17.1). Not all pits survive, but their regular arrangement allows for a plausible reconstruction. In a number of places, the pits overlap, suggesting that they belong to two different systems from different time periods: 34 larger pits, 5 × 5 feet in size, form a grid with square interstices that was later replaced with a grid consisting of 70 smaller pits with sizes of 4 square feet and long rectangular interstices. Even the first set of pits

was not big enough to allow large trees to spread their roots, and the trees of the second phase must have been smaller still. Such a drastic intervention into the sanctuary's horticultural organization can only have been due to a traumatic end of the first plantation. The pits of the first grove were dug when the temple was built around the middle of the second century BCE, since their axes line up with the surrounding temple walls. Animals intended for sacrifice could be bound to the trees, but also to iron rings set into the temple's front wall. It seems that this grove had already had a predecessor, but only a single plantation pit was identified, directly beside the back wall of the Hellenistic temple. This pit has in turn provided evidence that suggests even earlier phases, reaching back to the temple's original foundation in the sixth century.

Sacred Gardens on the Marble Map of Rome

The impression of the regular plantation grid in Gabii given by modern aerial photographs and plans is probably more strongly architecturalized than it was to ancient viewers. The same perspective is apparent also in the charts of several sanctuaries found on the ancient city map of Rome, the Severan Forma Urbis Romae (Carettoni, Colini, and Cozza 1960: pl. 29; 16; 20). The little dots and circles on the map must refer to horticultural features, but it is difficult to decide whether we are dealing with columns or trees. In the case of the sanctuary of Hercules Musarum on the Southern Campus Martius, an irregularly arranged inner ring of dots may represent trees. In the neighboring Porticus Octaviae, the sanctuary of Juno and Jupiter, the innermost of several colonnades only makes sense if it in fact consisted of trees, planted in parallel to the outer rows of columns. Although the inclusion of trees on the plan may seem counter-intuitive, it clearly emphasizes the importance of these groves.

In the map of the sanctuary surrounding the Temple of Claudius, we can observe long-stretched structures arranged at regular intervals. These may well represent stone-trimmed flower beds, since similar structures near the Templum Pacis have been archaeologically confirmed as such. Seeds found within them show that the classic Rosa Gallica was grown there (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 61–70). At the Templum Pacis, the sacred atmosphere of the garden not only conformed to the ideological appropriation of the goddess Pax by the Emperor, but also agreed with the expectations of the people strolling through Rome's elegant center. And it is, of course, no coincidence that the horticultural design of the sanctuary with its flower beds and works of art is reminiscent of the luxurious gardens of Villas.

Private Sacred Gardens

The peristyle gardens of Roman houses and villas only rarely lack elements appropriated from sacred gardens. Individual religious experience was no secondary, but rather a fundamental effect of these gardens. Unlike Greek sacred groves, which are admired as deep personal appreciations of the divine, the sacred gardens of Roman culture are often interpreted today as frills glued onto a profane attitude to life. On the other hand, scholars have also pointed out that the gardens of Roman villas were not appropriated

from Hellenistic houses, but rather seem to be related to Greek sanctuaries (Grassinger 2008; Grimal 1969: 67, 70–6, 302–35). When Tibullus insists that he would give up luxurious houses and "woods that imitate sacred groves in the houses" (3.3.15) for the love of Neaera, this is by no means an example of decorative imitation void of religious sentiment. Elsewhere, he describes sacrifices performed in the shade of trees and banquets held on grassy banks in precisely these gardens (2.5.95–6), a form of bucolic cultic activity that is also traceable in the archaeology of these gardens.

Gardens in Pompeii

The guests entertained in the banqueting room of the Casa del Moralista on the Via dell'Abbondanza of Pompeii (III 4, 2–3) could enjoy a view of a garden and a marble statue of Diana perched on a high base among the trees (Spinazzola 1953: 727–62). This sacred garden served the wine merchant's family not only with its beauty, but also as a setting for religious acts. At the feet of the statue stood a bronze thymiaterion and, a little further away, a bronze pan for burnt offerings. With its irregularly spaced, fully grown trees, these 300 m^2 of *hortus* looked like an authentic *lucus Dianae*.

On the southern outskirts of Pompeii, we find several commercial market gardens with accompanying cults. The most beautiful was the so-called Garden of Hercules (II 8, 6) (Jashemski 1979: 121, 279–88; Jashemski 1993: 92–4; Laforge 2009: 150). Besides extensive flower beds, it possessed at least eleven fruit trees, including olive, cherry and lemon. Near its north wall, it even featured a triclinium under a pergola. Immediately beside that stood an aedicula, built against the wall and housing a marble statue of Hercules. Outside it was an altar, shaded by a tree and surrounded by small terracotta figurines, evidently votive offerings that had accumulated over the years. Whether Hercules was venerated as the protector of the garden or whether the productive garden was considered a grove of the demigod probably depended on the attitude of the individual visitor and is thus impossible to decide.

Even where unambiguous evidence of cult institutions is lacking in the archaeological remains, we can still trace the religious aura that was created in a garden by incorporating notorious sacred components. In the garden of the house of Octavius Quartio, a long watercourse is fed from a miniature nymphaeum in an artificial cave, crowned by a pavilion of Diana (Spinazzola 1953: 369–421). This arrangement could be neither entered nor used. Instead, it was intended to invoke the religious atmosphere of a *lucus Dianae*, an intent that was facilitated by parallel rows of fruit trees lining the little stream.

Crowds of Dionysian figures, offering tables, Greek votive reliefs, sun dials, masks and oscilla, happily gurgling water and even a temple pediment – this and more can be found in the houses of Pompeii, such as the Casa degli amorini dorati, and serves not only to formally imitate a sacred garden, but also to create an auratic environment for religious acts, even if they only took place at two altars in the peristyle dedicated to the Lares and Egyptian gods (Seiler 1992). The masks and oscilla clearly evoke a rural Bacchic festival as in Virgil's "Georgica" (2.380–96) – with the caveat that Virgil's are made of bark and leather and hang on trees. Cultic accessories of these kinds did not necessarily have to be related to actual cult. To a perceptive viewer, they explicitly communicated the religious perception of universally divine nature.

Votive Inscriptions in the Parks of the Villas

This religious experience was conjured by means of inscriptions – a purpose that votive inscriptions in sanctuaries had always served. In a villa in the forest of Castelporziano near Ostia, an inscription was found addressed to "land-living" Silvanus, talkative Echo and the dryads (tree nymphs). In the third century CE, the owner of the villa, Antonius Balbus, sought to join the company of these divine inhabitants of the park by means of a self-written poem (Lauro 1988). Sentimental people may thus have achieved religious satisfaction already by putting up a votive inscription. A traditional and accordingly popular sphere for such activity was the cult of the Muses. In a villa garden outside Rome, votive inscriptions of the second century CE tell us of the "Muses waiting under the plantains for the true book-lover, in order to crown him with ivy" (*IG* 14.1011). In another villa at Bovillae, a poetic votive inscription has the owner laud the temple of the Muses and a grove full of violets, lilies, fruit trees and vines (*AE* 1927: 121).

The Sacro-Idyllic Theme

Ingeniously constructed sacred gardens and the expectation of religious experiences come together in something that can be described as the sacro-idyllic theme – termed *Sakralidylle* in German scholarship. This modern concept applies to images and texts that present rural, religious scenes with acting figures. Their expressivity makes them appear highly virtual and indeed it seems that they are designed to create atmosphere and ambience, not divine epiphany or assistance. For scholars, these thoroughly poetic texts are of no immediate use as antiquarian sources (Thédenat 1904), but are treated as documents of religious expectations. The frequent appearances of divine beings spiritually exalt profane activities of everyday life and simultaneously invite the reader to contemplate a virtual past full of piety and divinity. Reciting and reading these texts in company undoubtedly granted the environment of these activities, namely the garden, a more intense aura of the sacred. Like all poetry, these activities are thus almost religious in nature.

Propertius (3.3.25–36) receives his divine blessing as a poet when he dreams he lay in Helicon's soft shade, "where a new path had been made in mossy ground. Here was an emerald cavern lined with pebbles, and timbrels hung from its pumice stone; orgiastic emblems of the Muses; and a statue of father Silenus made of clay"; and soon the Muses appear and begin their playful game. This dream becomes imagined memory once the scene is moved to the early days of Rome, when, in the words of Tibullus (2.5), "Pan was still drenched with milk in the holm oak's and the garrulous pipes, sacred to the woodland god, hung on a tree, an offering from the wandering shepherd". Quite similar is Propertius' description (4.3–8) of the sanctuary of Silvanus in the time of king Tatius, imagined as a grove with a cave, covered in ivy, girded with gushing water and shaded by maple trees.

These poetic visions speak not of practiced religion, but of a search for primal originality, sought as a remedy for overburdened senses and self-alienation (Harmon 1986: 1943–55). In one case, we are in the position to compare a real grove and its sacro-idyllic exaltation: Ovid's entry for the 15th of March (*Fasti* 3.523–42) mentions the *lucus* of the nymph Anna Perenna on the Via Flaminia outside Rome. While the recently rediscovered site certainly features various votive altars, water installations and other votives

(Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2007: 212–4; Piranomonte 2002), it bears no relation to Ovid's description of uninhibited Bacchic orgies on orchard lawns with plenty of sex and alcohol. For Ovid and his cultured readers, the main point was that the plebeian frolickers are capable of enjoying simple pleasures in the shade of the sacred garden.

Sacro-Idyllic Images

Images use this theme even more boldly than texts. Accordingly, the popular wall decorations showing "springs, groves, mountains, sheep and shepherds" have little in common with real sacred gardens. It is interesting to note that Vitruvius (7.5.2) and Pliny (*Natural History* 35.116) mention these motifs of wall painting together with painted vistas of villa landscapes. Ever since Michael Rostowzew's classic study, the sacro-idyllic motif has been firmly established in the field of archaeology (Rostowzew 1911: 1–85; Rouveret 1989: 323–31). A very extensive wall-painting from Rome, now in the Villa Albani, exemplifies the standard components: a pavilion or aedicula, preferably built of wood and decorated with garlands, featuring a very visible cult image, dilapidated fences, a stream with a bridge, a gnarled old tree covered in votive offerings; other votives or extinguished torches leaning against the steps or arranged around a column; simple people performing cultic actions, or seen happening upon the scene accompanied by their animals; the trees of the grove or the porticoes of the nearest villa, just visible in the hazy distance. And, invariably, the cultic site with its ruinous buildings and gnarled trees is incredibly ancient.

The gnarled tree and tumbledown wall are central motifs also on the less detailed marble reliefs which were put up in the same way as the votive gifts they depict and thereby contributed to the sacralization of villa gardens (Von Hesberg 1986). In some cases, idealized memories of visits to such sites in Greece may have played a part, given that Pausanias states that the old rural sanctuaries were among the highlights travelers might expect to see in Greece.

The Sacro-Idyllic Atmosphere at Sorrento

A villa on the beach of Sorrento contained several such reliefs from the time of Hadrian. The best preserved shows a hunter – undoubtedly the villa's owner – and his friends offering a sacrifice to Diana while the goddess is present in person, seated on a rock in a grove (Mingazzini and Pfister 1956: 194–200; pl. 39–40). Spruce, pomegranate and oak trees are rendered with great care. Statius' (*Silvae* 2.2) detailed description of the villa of Pollius Felix in Sorrento allows us to delve further and shows that divine beings were omnipresent in this villa landscape. Hercules in particular was regularly worshipped in a small temple, built to replace the small thatched hut he had possessed before. Statius records the aetiology behind this intensification of the cult: during a storm, the guests, including extremely attractive young girls, sought shelter in the hut. This erotic touch is explicitly sexualized on a sacro-idyllic relief in Boston: Hercules appears as a god of pleasure and his sexual partner, who should be a nymph, is clearly identified as a contemporary woman by her breast band (Von Hesberg 1986: 19–20).

The success of the sacro-idyllic motif lies in its temporal distance and its closeness to nature. Both these aspects are intended to facilitate an escape from the problematic changes of contemporary culture. The poets of the Augustan period in particular were interested in writing about religious sentiment in rural sanctuaries and the early Empire produced the most impressive works of sacro-idyllic art.

The Ara Pacis and Virgil's "Georgics"

Two peaks of cultural achievement may serve to exemplify the effects of these images and texts. Virgil's didactic poem "Georgica", dated to 37–29 BCE, and the Ara Pacis, built between 13–9 BCE, are both part of the political and cultural discourse of the *aurea aetas*, the Golden Age, governed by Augustus' programmatic revival of old religious practices.

The poem is about the renewal of agriculture, but soon leaves the rural populace behind and focuses on fauns and dryads. It contains numerous unusually detailed descriptions of trees in sacred groves, including willow, gorse, poplar, chestnut, oak, cherry, elm and laurel. Virgil devotes entire pages to descriptions of shoots, knots, branches, vines, bark and grafts, interspersed with memories of a vast and ancient oak tree in the grove of Jupiter and a vision of a future rural sanctuary of Augustus on the river Mincio, where peasants sacrifice to Bacchus shaded by elm trees and shepherds play in the grass.

These passages read like a commentary on the reliefs showing Italia-Tellus and a sacrificing Aeneas on the outer wall of the Ara Pacis (Caneva 2010; Bordignon 2010). Although made of marble, this wall is built around the altar like a wooden fence with airily suspended fruit-laden garlands, protecting the altar from the surrounding park in the same way as the pavilions on sacro-idyllic scenes. The creeping and climbing vegetation seemingly encroaching on this marble shell perfectly illustrates the visions of bountiful fertility expressed in the "Georgica". The Ara Pacis, a masterpiece of artistic stylization, is simultaneously made to suggest a rural structure in a grove that is slowly and naturally reclaiming it from the outside.

Conclusion

From Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire, the appearance of sacred gardens as religious spaces significantly changes. Already the differences in the natural environment of Greece and Italy obviously result in differences between the Greek ἄλσος and the Roman *lucus*. But beyond these diachronic and geographical changes, the religious experiences of gardens and groves are continuously governed by the wistful desire for a life lived in closer proximity to the gods and to nature. Sacred gardens, irrespective of whether they were actually ancient or of more recent date, whether they were privately owned sacred spaces or religious sentiment manifested in image and text, always transported the mind back into imagined memory. And with his typical sarcasm, Varro put it as follows: "Now they are diminished or entirely gone, for long has the goddess of avarice reigned supreme" (*On the Latin Language* 5.49).

Guide to Further Reading

On the function of groves in the context of divination, see Bonnechere (2007). Other well-documented sacred groves of Greece can be found in Miller (1990: 157-9) and Birge (1981). Two recent excavations of Roman groves are published in Villedieu (2001) and Carroll (2010).

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CHAPTER 18

Religion and Tomb

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Introduction

Human attitudes to death and burial are determined by various moments of religious experience. All ancient cultures are alike in that their dealings with the deceased are enveloped in highly ritualized ceremonies, consisting of various forms of burial rites, grave furnishings and commemoration of the dead. The actors involved are guided by religious motivations that allow them to more easily accept and thereby master challenges to the rationality of their personal and collective world order. The actions required after the death of a human being in a given society can be the result of very different beliefs. Collective and personal mourning for the loss of a familiar individual is of central importance in this regard. The material expenditure and ritual effort that surrounded the extraction of the deceased from their community and their transfer to a new status served to stabilize society in complex ways, especially since the loss of a prominent member or a leader was particularly threatening to a community.

In Classical Antiquity, we find beliefs of an underworld with its own deities and unique topography, distinct from the world of the living. The living both feared and respected the dead, and were anxious to transfer them to the other world correctly by employing various rituals. Conventions of this kind generally include religiously colored rationalizations, or at least derive from them. Distinguishing between religion and superstition is thus not always easy, and many archaeological finds, such as curse tablets, indicate magical practices used to banish the dead.

The slices of the ancient world that are our main focus here show a great variety of burial and commemorative customs. This suggests a significant amount of freedom regarding religious beliefs, but also a high rate of social change. In Oriental cultures, on the other hand, certain forms of veneration of the dead persisted for long periods of time. Unlike the monotheistic religions, Antiquity did not give rise to a canon of otherworldly punishments

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Figure 18.1 Relief depicting a funerary procession, from a necropolis in Amiternum. Photograph courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute (Greifenhagen, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 30.516).

and rewards for one's behavior during one's lifetime, even though we do find traces of analogous patterns of thought, for example in notions of the isle of the blessed.

While the surviving literary sources and images are relatively easy to read, any reconstruction of rites from archaeological remains is far more difficult. Some objects, such as certain types of ceramics or funerary beds, were produced exclusively for burial or commemorative ceremonies, while others were intentionally destroyed during these ceremonies. Finally, many essential elements of rites, be they performative acts or ephemeral objects, have left no traces at all.

Greek Burial Rites

Crucial for our understanding of Greek burial rites is the description of Patroclus' burial in Homer's *Iliad* (16.23). This text allows one to identify certain stages of an élite burial that continued to be performed even in the Hellenistic period (Garland 1985; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995).

The belief in the impurity of both the deceased and the bereaved explains various elements of the burial ritual. After a person's death, the corpse is washed, anointed and laid out. This act of laying out the body (prothesis) is known to us from numerous images. It appears on Mycenaean larnakes, Geometric grave vases, Archaic votive tablets (Brooklyn 1996; Mommsen 1997), Attic white-ground lekythoi (Oakley 2004) and in tomb paintings.

Besides prothesis, these images also thematize another important aspect of funerary ritual: the lament (Shapiro 1991; Alexiou 1974). The lamenters are depicted with their arms raised, tearing their hair and beating their chests. This highly-ritualized and performative act of lament was often elaborately and expensively staged. As a result, the extent of the lament, as well as other parts of the burial ceremony, was subsequently regulated by law-givers, as is attested by inscriptions and various ancient authors.

This first acts of prothesis and lament which took place in the house of the deceased were followed by the transfer of the corpse (ekphora) to the actual burial site (Figure 18.2, 18.3). From the seventh century BCE onwards, this was generally located outside the city gates, adjacent to the important roads. A clay model found at Vari in Attica and

dating to the first half of the seventh century BCE shows a sarcophagus on a high wagon being led by a man and accompanied by a rider. Lamenting women stand atop the wagon, their hands raised in mourning (Kurtz and Boardman 1985: 97, fig. 22). Inside this wagon lay a clay model of the deceased, wrapped in a burial shroud. Other images also confirm that the deceased were shrouded and no longer wore their everyday clothing. After the corpse had reached the actual burial site, depending on the type of burial, it was either placed in the designated pit or burned on a pyre and then buried in an urn. Funerary speeches and libations are attested as part of the ceremony conducted at the graveside. After the burial had been completed, the mourners returned to the deceased's former home, where they had to cleanse themselves of *miasma*, the defilement caused by being in contact with the deceased. Thereafter, a funeral meal was held in the house of a relative. Archaeology has further unearthed sacrificial sites in the necropoleis, bringing to light drinking cups, jugs and plates, together with burnt ash and animal bones. These findings confirm that some funeral meals were also held in the necropoleis themselves. In the Kerameikos at Athens, however, there seems to have been some distance between sacrificial site and grave, with the result that the timing of the sacrifice and its relationship to the actual burial remain unclear.

In the case of Athens, we also have evidence of post-mortem rites (ta nomizómena), which the families performed in varying intervals at the grave. Depictions on

Figure 18.2 Hirschfeld-crater. A monumental late geometric funereary vessel. National Museum Athens, inv. 990. Photograph courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute (Hermann Wagner?, Neg. D-DAI-ATH 1975/664).

white-ground lekythoi illustrate these scenes (Oakley 2004). The images show women adorning funerary steles with garlands or anointing them with oil. The bases of the steles are used to deposit oil flasks, cakes and honey. This cult of the dead was an important civic duty in the fifth century BCE. Its disregard could lead to concrete punishment, as is exemplified by the tragedy of Antigone.

Forms of Burial

In the period between the eighth and fourth centuries BCE, we find both inhumations and cremations in Athens and the rest of the Greek world. One must note, however, that cremation becomes common in Greece only in the Submycenaean period. In the Minoan and Mycenaean periods, we find only inhumations. One of the earliest archaeological attestations of a secondary cremation is the élite grave of Lefkandi dated to the mid-tenth century BCE (Popham et al. 1982: 169–74). After the burning of the body, the bones were collected, wrapped in a fine cloth and buried in a protogeometric amphora. Many aspects of this form of burial correlate with the descriptions found in the Homeric epics. Not much later, we encounter secondary cremations of this kind also in Attica, Eretria, Eleusis and Mycenae, as well as on Thera, Crete and in Southern Italy. Primary cremation does not occur before the end of the eighth century, meaning that the deceased is burnt directly inside the burial pit. Although we can identify certain predilections for certain burial types in certain periods, inhumations and cremations occur side by side throughout the period under discussion here.

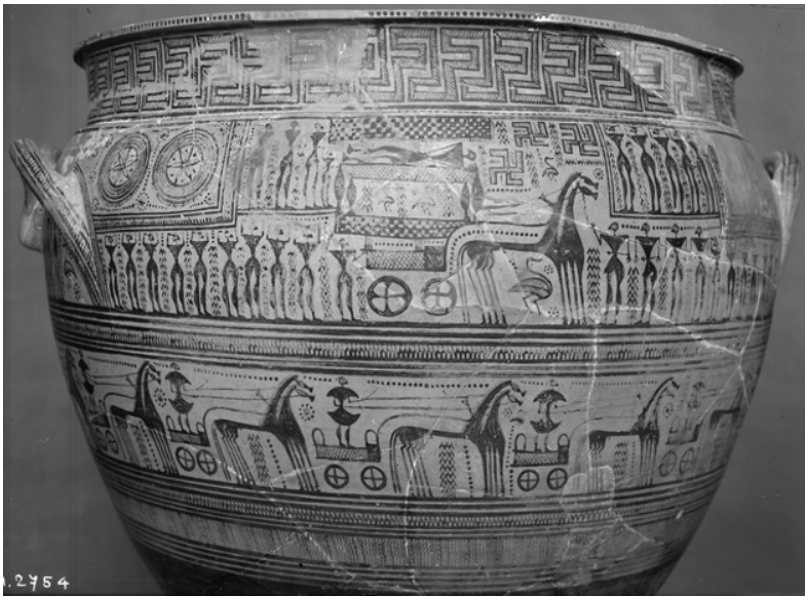

Figure 18.3 Hirschfeld-crater. Detail of the Ekphora-scene. Photograph courtesy of the German Archaeological Institute (Hermann Wagner, Neg. D-DAI-ATH 2754).

Grave Types

Inhumations occur in a great variety of grave types. The multiple inhumations in tholos and chamber tombs that were predominant in the Mycenaean period cease to occur in Submycenaean Athens and give way to individual inhumations in stone cists. In the Archaic period, we can observe a diversification of grave types. Various types of sarcophagi begin to appear, made of different materials and with varying decoration. Inhumations are also often performed in large vessels (enchytrismoi). Graves of the Archaic period are covered with a mound of earth and crowned with a grave marker, whereas in the Classical period stoutly stonewalled grave-terraces lining the arterial roads come to be typical of Attic burial districts. The actual graves are dug into the backfill of the grave-terraces. The front wall of such a terrace is typically lined with rows of figural or inscribed grave steles, but also statues of animals or sphinxes. These grave-terraces or periboloi tombs are usually owned by a single family. Underground chamber tombs and hypogea are mainly known from Southern Italian cities such as Tarentum and Naples where they become popular especially in the Hellenistic period.

Urn graves usually consist of a square shaft into which the ash-bearing vessels are deposited. These graves can also be crowned by burial mounts (Kurtz and Boardman 1985: fig. 15 a, b), and are occasionally marked with steles. Urns are very diverse, ranging from simple, undecorated pots to vessels made from fine Attic ceramics or even metal. Golden or gilded pots are particularly common on the periphery of the Greek world and in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods. In Derveni (Macedonia), a person's ash was buried in a gilded monumental krater, adorned with Dionysian motifs.

Grave Goods

Generally speaking, grave goods can be divided into two functional categories. Analytically, one can distinguish between objects given to the deceased and objects related to rituals performed at the grave by the family. In the periods under discussion here, and by contrast with the earlier Mycenaean period, we find only quite modest grave goods. Jewelry and other objects made from precious metals are hardly used. Ceramics are most common. In seventh- and sixth-century Athens, we often find ceramics used for the symposium, which were placed in so-called offering ditches outside the graves and then burned in a ceremonial act (Kistler 1998). From the second half of the sixth century BCE onwards, the lekythos begins to become predominant in funerary rites as the traditional vessel for oil and ointment. Besides ceramics, one also occasionally finds metal grave goods, such as strigils and mirrors. Weapons, such as spearheads and swords, stop being used after the Geometric period. Many graves contain no grave goods at all, but this should not lead one to suppose that the deceased was poor, since graves without grave furnishings are often crowned with ornate and surely expensive steles. In the Hellenistic period, grave goods become extremely rare in Attica. Most common and typical are spindle-shaped oil flasks as well as golden or gilded wreaths that crown the deceased. In some isolated cases and locations one can also find clay figurines, masks and moveable dolls in the graves.

Grave Markers/Semata

From the eighth century BCE onwards, above-ground grave markers can be identified in the shape of kraters and amphorae (Figure 18.2). In the late seventh century BCE these vases begin to be replaced with funerary steles, some of which show figural depictions, and with funerary statues, the kouroi and korai. In the Archaic period, the male images (kouroi) predominate. Depictions of girls (korai) are only rarely found as grave statues. Also the figural funerary steles only rarely show women in the Archaic period, while armed warriors, athletes, old men resting on walking sticks and youths are common. This custom of funerary representation ends around the beginning of the fifth century BCE, and figural funerary steles resurface only around 430 BCE, now with an altered repertoire of motifs. The main new feature is the large number of depictions of women, who are shown with children on their lap or flanked by a servant girl. Depictions of entire families are also a new addition to the repertoire: an interesting aspect is that two of the depicted persons are often holding hands. These types of figural grave reliefs are most commonly found in Athens and Attica, and are closely linked to the grave type of the peribolos tomb. In other Greek poleis, such grave markers are far less common. In the third century BCE, this form of above-ground burial design disappears, giving way to the small columns used as grave markers in the Hellenistic period. These either remain undecorated, or are simply inscribed with the name of the deceased and adorned with floral ornaments, a branch of ivy, for example (Kurtz and Boardman 1985: 195, fig. 58 a, b).

Conceptions of the Otherworld

The images that are used in a grave-context, on semata or grave vases, hardly ever thematize religious beliefs or conceptions of an otherworld. Some of the images, showing, e.g., prothesis, ekphora or ritual lament, signify the proper performance of the burial ritual. A second group of images focuses on the social role of the deceased. The funerary steles show warriors, athletes and citizens, with the latter becoming more common from the late Archaic period onwards. The family depictions of the fourth century BCE are part of the same development and reveal a shift in the communal value system. Whereas the relevant roles of the sixth century BCE were those of warrior, athlete and male citizen, the fifth and fourth centuries saw the oikos acquire a new sociopolitical function as the progenitor of the family and thereby also of the polis, which is reflected also in the images. The images and rituals surrounding burial thus cannot be used as sources for conceptions of the otherworld, even though this has often been attempted (Rohde 1961). In current discourse, the actions performed in the burial ritual are interpreted as expressions of a system of social norms. Burial rituals reflect collective conceptions of the interplay between life and death, and allow insights into the distribution of social roles, the order of society and its moral values.

Conceptions of the otherworld, on the other hand, can mainly be derived from written sources, such as the underworld scenes of the Odyssey, literary visions of the underworld, austere epitaphs, magical texts, cult regulations and theological poetry (Chaniotis 2000: 159). These vary greatly and partly contradict one another. Their diversity is the result of individual eschatological expectations which can differ because of social status,

education, initiation into mystery cults or philosophical orientation. Views on the realm of the dead thus range from haplessly vegetating, powerless shades to conceptions of a transmigration of souls or blissful Elysian dreams. The difficulties in dealing with these diverse and hardly tangible belief systems have therefore led modern research to take a different approach.

Etruria: Tombs and Rituals

The unique discoveries made in the so-called Tomb of the Five Chairs in Cerveteri, dated to the seventh century BCE, may serve to exemplify a couple of fundamentals regarding the Etruscan cult of the dead and their conceptions of the otherworld. In a subterranean chamber, five seats with backrests were hewn from the rock side by side. Upon them are seated the figures of three men and two women, made from terra-cotta, and in front of them stand stone tables, an altar, a woven basket and two empty seats. The room is directly connected to a chamber in which a married couple was laid to rest.

Tombs and burial sites are among the best researched aspects of Etruscan culture. The architecturally impressive and lavishly decorated necropoleis of Etruria attracted the attention of archaeologists more easily than the settlements which are often hidden under modern towns. The first-hand evidence provided by Roman and Greek authors confirms the intensity of the Etruscan interest in death-cult and religion that is unusual even by ancient standards (e.g., Livy 5.1.6). Indirectly, these authors also provide us with parts of the extensive Etruscan literature on religion and religious rituals which does not survive in the original. The few longer existent texts of Etruscan origin are religious in nature (liber zagrabiensis, tabula Capuana, Pyrgi tablets), but provide no insights into funerary matters. In order to properly fathom the religious dimension of the Etruscan ways of handling death without resorting to the commonplace of the mystery of this culture, we depend on a contextualized analysis of the archaeological remains of architecture, furnishings and death cult. But despite the wealth of material, this remains in most cases work to be done.

The Tomb of the Five Chairs shows that the tomb was considered a representation of the house and its furnishings. Furthermore, the five terracotta figures probably represent the ancestors, with the two empty chairs being intended to receive the deceased couple in the otherworld. Ancestor worship and the reunion with one's ancestors in the afterlife thus emerge as constants of Etruscan death cult and its pictorial representations. Sacrificial offerings, suggested for example by the presence of an altar, seem also to have been required to ensure a proper transition into the otherworld.

In Etruria and elsewhere, the tomb thus serves as a space – and the burial as an event – that brings families together. The communal performance of rites serves to shape, stabilize and overtly celebrate their social and religious norms, in other words, their identity. Various kinds of archaeological evidence allow us certain insights into different aspects of the relationship between tomb and religion: the tomb architecture sheds light on structures, objects illustrate ritual actions performed in the context of burials and a number of pictorial representations provide information about death-related beliefs and experiences.

Grave Architecture and Structures

If we leave regional and diachronic deviation to one side, the starting point for all further considerations concerning Etruscan tomb cult and the common denominator of the discovered tombs is their conception as the house of the deceased. This conception can be traced from the hut-shaped urns of the proto-Etruscan Villanovan culture, via the ground plans of the chambers in the great orientalizing tumuli to the detailed tomb paintings in Archaic through Hellenistic Tarquinia. This house is the site of the liminal process that is the journey of the deceased into the realm of the dead (see also below) (Riva and Stoddart 1996: 96).

The large variations in the shape of Etruscan tomb buildings are often due to their natural environment, but also seem to emphasize a certain urban or regional identity and are subject to diachronic change.

The geology of Southern and Central Etruria made it possible to cut tombs directly into the bedrock. In Cerveteri, this technique was used to create the most monumental and simultaneously most detailed tombs. From the Orientalizing period onwards, we find complex chamber tombs covered by tumuli with diameters up to 50 meters. They were accessible via a long dromos, ending in a chamber that housed the burials of a single nuclear family. Side chambers could accommodate additional burials. That these structures were conceived of as houses is mainly apparent in the interior design of these early structures: ground plans, furnishings and ceiling designs clearly imitate elements found in the houses of the living. The Tomb of the Hut (680 BCE), for instance, suggests a semi-circular hut with a straw roof, whereas tombs of the sixth century BCE, such as the Tomb of the Shields and Chairs, consist of an antechamber similar to an atrium and up to three small burial chambers. Doors, windows and columns, hewn from the rock, but also furniture such as funerary beds, thrones and wall-mounted shields, breathed life into these subterranean chambers.

The layout of the great tumuli obeyed the rules of *etrusca disciplina*, the Etruscan doctrine of divine order, in that they are symmetrical and their entrances point towards the north-west, the Etruscan's location of the underworld (Prayon 1975).

From the sixth century BCE onwards, conceptions of the borders between inside and outside, between the world of the living and the dead, began to shift. Domestic features are increasingly moved from the inside to the outside of the tombs (Izzet 1996). The new cube-shaped tomb type consisted of square blocks, partly cut from the rock, partly assembled as masonry, and featured a visible entrance. The façades of these tombs sometimes form unified rows. The changes to the ritual space thus affect both the interior and the exterior of the tombs, but also influence the "cityscape" of the necropolis as a whole. In Cerveteri, the urbanization of the settlement, located on a tuff-stone plateau, first resulted in the development of the two urban necropoleis of the Banditaccia and of Monte Abbatone on the two neighboring plateaus. From the late Archaic period onwards, the visual perception of the tombs, which had originally been characterized by the imposing tumuli, was now supplemented by "urban" rows of tomb façades.

Only 50 kilometers away in Tarquinia, the situation was quite different. Here also the tombs of the Orientalizing and Archaic periods are buried under tumuli, but they are usually constructed as simple rectangular chambers. The tombs of a small élite were adorned with sweeping wall-paintings (see below) that show the architectural details of

the imagined "house", among other things. In other settlements of Central Etruria, such as Blera, Norchia or Viterbo, rock-cut necropoleis dominate, featuring tombs that show façades similar to houses but with interiors that consist of only a single modest chamber, driven into the vertical rock-face.

Cult Practice and Actions

The burial of a deceased person and the periodically-recurring commemorative ceremonies were regulated by ritual actions, about which we know very little. The custom of laying out the deceased, familiar to us from Greco-Roman antiquity, is attested also in Etruria on the tomb paintings at Tarquinia (Tomb of the Dead, Tomb of the Funerary Bed). The paintings show the deceased laid out on richly-decorated beds and attended by male and female lamenters. The subsequent burial, and presumably also later festivals of the dead, were accompanied by ancestor cult, bloody sacrifices, and games.

An impressive, early example of the cult for deceased heads of the family in the tomb itself has already been mentioned in the Tomb of the Five Chairs. One must assume that the funerary community offered, among other things, sacrifices of food and drink to the ancestors who were present as terracotta figures. Another expression of ancestor cult, found in some regions of Etruria, was the tendency to anthropomorphize the ancestors: from the seventh century BCE onwards, we have terracotta urns with facial and bodily features, sitting on thrones. These are particularly common in and around Volterra. In the fourth century BCE, the ancestor cult clearly becomes influenced by Greek forms of heroization. In the tombs of the ruling *gentes*, the heads of the families are depicted as gods or dining in the company of gods (Tomb of the Shields, Tomb of the Underworld).

The Etruscan teachings set down in the *libri haruspicini* show that the Etruscans considered the bloody sacrifice of certain animals a prerequisite for the immortality of the soul and its deification (e.g., Prayon 2006: 33). The popularity of predatory and sacrificial animals in tomb art seems to be due to this belief. Early tomb paintings found in the pediments of tomb chambers show panthers and lions in almost heraldic poses, flanking a support or possibly an altar. Some Hellenistic sarcophagi and urns feature not only depictions of fighting animals, but also scenes of bloody human sacrifice, taken from Greek mythology (Steuernagel 1998). This too might be interpreted as a reference to the "prestigious" origins of the actual animal sacrifices. These and other sacrifices for the dead may have been performed on the top of the tomb. Many of the great tumuli in Cerveteri have ramps that provided access to a platform that used to exist atop the hypogea before the burial mound was raised. Staircases leading to the top of cube tombs and rock tombs with platforms likewise attest to the ritual function of these sites (Prayon 2006: 33–7). Even more explicit are the examples of monumental altars in the midst of necropoleis, such as the staircase with a platform found at the edge of the tumulus of Melone del Sordo (Cortona) or the detached round altar in the Grotta-Porcina necropolis at Vetralla.

The burial ceremonies conducted by the most eminent families of Etruria may well have included athletic competitions, music and dance (Torelli 1986: 231–3). While this is only one possible interpretation of the detailed and artistically sophisticated wall paintings

that adorn Etruscan tombs of the seventh to the fifth centuries BCE, it is supported by the fact that the deceased is himself present at some of the depicted festivities (e.g., Tomb of the Jugglers) (Steingräber 2006). The famous Tomb of the Augurs (ca. 520 BCE) not only features depictions of athletic competitions like wrestling, but also of the bloody game of Phersu, showing a masked figure called Phersu setting a dog on a bleeding, unarmed man with a sack over his head.

Religious Experiences

If death and the otherworld were of particular importance for the world of the living in Etruria, how was this fundamental human experience religiously interpreted and justified? It is clear that the Etruscans considered death an unavoidable fate, the timing of which was predetermined by the gods (Torelli 1986: 234; Prayon 2006: 6). The lid of a Villanovan urn from Bisenzio shows a chained, bearlike monster, surrounded by dancing warriors. This is probably a death-demon or a personification of death.

For the Etruscans, death marked the beginning of a not purely metaphorical journey into the underworld. Unlike in the Greek world, for example, this journey and its goal were commonly depicted, especially in late Etruscan tomb art. The deceased can be seen embarking on their journey on foot, horseback or in a cart, and sometimes even traversing bodies of water. The fourth century BCE Tomb of the Blue Demons (Tarquinia) provides the most explicit documentation of this journey to the underworld. Whilst one side wall shows the husband driving in a biga (chariot), accompanied by dancers and musicians, the other shows his wife and a child disembarking from a boat steered by a ferryman. They are welcomed by figures that are presumably deceased relatives and underworld demons. The main wall of the chamber shows the goal of both spouses, a splendid underworld banquet.

From the fifth century BCE onwards, the Etruscan conceptions of the underworld are strongly influenced by Greek mythology, blended with Etruscan tradition, which includes, among other things, a number of virtually unidentifiable underworld deities and demons, whose attributes and inscriptions suggest that they must have possessed quite specific functions. Charun, whose name is loaned from the Greek ferryman of the dead, is characterized by his untamed hair, his hooked nose, and a hammer. A unique sculpture of Charun was found in the so-called Tomb of the Demons at Cerveteri (second half of the fourth century BCE), where he was guarding the entrance. Other demons look every bit as frightening, with Tuchulcha, for example, featuring blue skin and snakes writhing in his hair. The only named female demon, Vanth, bears a torch and accompanies the deceased on the journey into the underworld.

The Roman Empire: Graves and Rituals

In principle, Roman culture is governed by similar patterns in its engagement with death. However, the range of possibilities is now larger than it was in Greece and Etruria, since the Imperium Romanum integrated very diverse peoples, some with long-standing traditions and firmly-established rituals. Examples include Egypt and the Near East, but

also the Jews, who largely resisted integration, especially in religious matters. Originally, Roman tombs were very similar to Greek and Etruscan models. In the late Republic, new forms were developed which continued into the Empire, albeit with partial modifications (Toynbee 1971:11; von Hesberg 1992: 19). Finally, in Late Antiquity, Christianity caused significant change.

Our knowledge is qualified by the extreme fluctuations in the amount of surviving graves and tombs. In Gaul, especially in Gallia Belgica, we have a wealth of them, whereas only a few are known from Aquitania. The different strata of society are similarly unevenly represented. Full Roman citizens are only marginally represented in the archaeology of Rome by comparison with senators, knights and freedmen. The forms of commemoration and their extravagance are also far from homogeneous. Within the same town and time period, we find vast monuments practically devoid of grave goods next to graves richly equipped with a wealth of precious items but lacking any sort of monument. This is at least partly due to the high mobility and permissiveness of Roman society that allowed various forms to exist side by side. This applies not only to the provinces, but also to the cities of Italy (Kockel 1983: 11; Heinzelmann 2000: 49) and especially to Rome, where we can encounter many of these forms.

Funerary Rites

Ritual patterns that had been established in Greece and Italy were similarly valid at Rome. By means of certain acts, the deceased was separated from the community of the living and transferred into the space now appropriate for him. He was wrapped in a shroud and generally laid out in his house for three days, followed by the elaborate *pompa* to the grave (Figure 18.1); if the family was of high rank, this procession might pause on the forum for ceremonies, including the *laudatio funebris* (Flaig 1995: 115–48). Depending on family tradition, the corpse was either burned and the ash buried in an urn, or directly inhumed. Individual cremations and inhumations can differ quite markedly from one another, and the observable variants even include customs advocated by philosophical schools. Terentius Varro, for example, was laid to rest on the leaves of various trees, because this was a Pythagorean custom. Differences in social rank, local tradition and normative rules could thus lead to the development of quite different forms. These include partial burial practices such as *os resectum*, which entailed cutting a finger off the corpse so that the deceased did not completely pass into the possession of the chthonic gods. Furthermore, one must note the extreme effort sometimes invested both by the families and by the participating populace (Toynbee 1971: 43). Well-known are the funerary ceremonies conducted by senatorial families that included actors bringing to life the wax portraits of family ancestors as part of the funerary *pompa*. After Sulla's death, the women of Rome allegedly recreated his portrait in incense, an object that must have been incredibly valuable and was borne along in the procession. In the case of Gaius Cestius, for instance, we know that certain valuable cloths (*attalici*), i.e., probably fabrics woven with gold thread, were not allowed to be deposited in his tomb (von Hesberg 1992: 10). Instead, they were sold and the revenue paid for the statues around his famous pyramid. At Caesar's funeral, the Roman people allegedly heaped his corpse with gifts.

As in the Greek cities, laws were passed to curb such excesses, beginning already with the ten tables. Given that such regulations were regularly renewed, we can assume that there was a strong desire to exalt the deceased, which was simultaneously seen as inappropriate (Hope and Marshall 2000: 24).

Commemoration Rituals

The commemoration of the dead was of central importance. Families assembled at the graves of their relatives on certain days of the year, including the *rosalia*, *violaria* and *parentalia*, to partake in commemorative ceremonies and meals. Many tomb complexes were fitted with couches, wells and tables for precisely this purpose. The details of what was consumed are but badly known, but one need hardly doubt that we are dealing with full meals (von Hesberg in Fasold et al. 1998: 13). Much of the tableware found near tombs probably stems from such events. Their main purpose was to increase the cohesion of the families; this interpretation is supported by the fact that these events were increasingly acknowledged by the architecture under the Empire, with benches being added for the living. During the ceremonies, the tombs were decorated with flowers, as is indicated not only by the names of the festivals, but also by the architectural ornamentation of the tomb complexes. Many tombs feature tubes through which one could pour libations to the dead. In combination with other observations, this suggests that the Romans held a magically connoted belief in the necessity of providing sustenance for the dead. It probably originated in religious behavior in the context of sacrifice, with the significant difference that these libations are intended to reach their object of veneration directly (Carroll, in Hope and Huskinson 2011: 126).

Unlike any culture before it, Roman culture developed a rich range of monuments and art forms intended to commemorate the dead. Although some members of this society considered Egyptian monuments to be all the more monumental, these also adhered to a far more rigid typology in many respects. If we look at the Empire as a whole, it is surprising that even the most "peripheral" provinces show a large range of monuments of various styles and sizes (Berns 2003: 20). They often incorporate elements with religious connotations, be they buildings shaped like temples or altars, or series of altars used as interior decoration. In addition, we have a wealth of further decorative elements, including candelabra, garlands, and depictions of ritual objects, which are otherwise found only in sanctuaries.

At the same time, however, there is an equally large number of buildings that lack any such elements or contrast them with other images. There is thus no firmly-established religious cosmos of images in a tomb context. Instead, the focus lies on the qualities of the deceased and their accomplishments for society and family, their personal happiness in marriage or at a feast, even on their professional success.

In the Republican period and under the early Empire, these themes are central messages of many tombs. They are repeatedly picked up in eulogies and epitaphs and can even be referenced in images via condensed symbols, with honors, for example, being hinted at by depictions of wreaths and seats of honor, and female virtues being represented by household items from the domestic female sphere.

This obviously entails that the images of the deceased are a central element of these tombs. They are found throughout the Empire and even the occasional "cartoony"

execution from the provinces still makes clear that these are images of the dead. They are often portrayed as agents, emphasizing their qualities in life. This desire for portraits is so strong that it is increasingly blended with mythology in the second and third centuries CE. The deceased could either appear in the guise of deities, such as Aphrodite or Spes, or are identified with figures from the great myths on their sarcophagi, with Penthesilea and Achilles, for example. This does not mean, of course, that they are identified with these figures, but that they are ascribed comparable qualities. This explains why it was possible to depict a married couple in a scene that shows Achilles stabbing Penthesilea. The narrative context is suspended in favor of an ascription of quality.

Conceptions of the Otherworld

Again, one has to disentangle various different aspects. On the one hand, one can assume that there were widely-held, conventional notions, including, for example, the custom of giving the dead a coin for the ferryman to the underworld – a belief that more enlightened contemporaries like Lucian could only ridicule. Such conventions show great local variation: in some necropoleis a coin is found on every corpse, in others they are completely absent.

Many other customs are relevant in this context, e.g., the practice of burying children with their toys, their favorite possessions. In some regions, we find the custom of giving the dead a lamp to light their way in the darkness of the underworld. In all these cases, the complexity of the tradition makes it difficult to determine whether we are dealing with firmly-established beliefs or with less explicitly reflected conventions.

It is equally unclear to what extent the dedication of graves to the Manes constitutes a change in the religious conception of the grave. The Dis Manibus formula first appears in inscriptions of the early Empire, but may have to be interpreted as a confirmation of a previously existing belief. A further problem is that the conception of these chthonic deities is relatively vague and thus hard to evaluate.

What one can say is that traditional conceptions of underworld gods, imagined as Pluto and Proserpina, as well as a belief in the punishment of the wicked in the underworld, embodied, for example, in the myths of the Danaids and Ocnus, are more common than in Greek funerary art. Unfortunately, they tell us little about religious beliefs, since they embed the events at the grave and the death of the loved one in this world. Like many other myths depicted on graves, they constitute reflections on death. It will undoubtedly have been comforting to see that gods and heroes suffered just as men did, that even death could be overcome, and that commemoration could be so long-lived. On the other hand, however, we also have attestations of an extreme focus on life, emblematically represented in antiquity by images of skeletons. Implicitly, they instigate the viewer to enjoy life, since bones are all that will remain. The significance of these images is thus not comparable to the Christian Memento mori, which includes the religiously founded command to live in awe of god in order to be able to partake of eternal life.

Even though this particular symbol is not to be found on Christian graves of Late Antiquity, the long internal conflicts did result in a world of images that has but little in common with that of antiquity. The deceased are no longer seen as part of the community of the living, but are now surrounded with images of Christ and scenes taken from the

Old and New Testaments. Based on their stories of salvation, they can now hope for resurrection and for solace in heaven.

Conclusion

Funerary rites allow a deceased individual to transition to another "place" and into another social status. They thus constitute a central aspect of religious experience. The social significance of an individual's death and the attempts to stop encroaching oblivion are tangible in many of the relevant archaeological remains.

Despite the differences in the burial customs and funerary monuments of the regions and time periods discussed above, we can identify certain similarities in the ritual elements. The ways in which ancient cultures handle death is strongly affected by the desire for eternal commemoration. Commemorating the dead is thus the most important task of society, even if it is manifested in quite different forms, depending on social status, regional tradition and diachronic change. Archaeological evidence mainly consists of the remains of the dead and their grave goods as well as the semata visible above ground, be they steles, inscriptions, house-tombs, or monumental tumuli in the necropoleis, which were generally situated outside ancient settlements. In addition, material remains of commemorative festivities in the honor of the dead can sometimes be identified. For Greece and Rome, we know of days of the dead that brought families together to decorate the family grave, give offerings of food and drink to the deceased and dine together.

Guide to Further Reading

A recently-published overview on death in ancient cultures is provided by Taylor (2011). Interests in a more strongly anthropological approach to ritual and ritual practices can be satisfied by the volume edited by Metcalf and Huntington (2005). An indispensable introduction to methods and theories relating to ancient burial customs is provided by the volume edited by Marchegay, Le Dinahet, and Salles (1998). The volume edited by Kümmel, Schweizer, and Veit (2008) offers interesting case studies that also include the areas north of the Alps in the Iron Age.

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PART V

Designing and Appropriating Sacred Space

CHAPTER 19

Archaeology of Christian Initiation

Robin M. Jensen

Introduction

Initiation rituals are thought to be among the most important loci of individual religious experience, in particular due to intensive embodiment in the course of the ritual. Whereas the concept of "initiation" opens up important comparative perspectives, the rituals thus addressed vary widely and have left very different traces in the archaeological record. Therefore, this chapter picks out Christian initiation as a case study. Early Christians believed that the ritual of baptism accomplished a variety of personal changes in the individuals who underwent the rite. Accordingly, this multi-faceted "rite of passage" cleansed its recipients of personal and inherited sin, it signified their spiritual illumination, it joined them to the community, and it symbolized their expectation of future resurrection. Although aspects of the ritual's meaning or practice varied in some respects from place to place, its benefits were effected by a set of discrete actions and conveyed through distinct elements. For example, cleansing of sin was achieved through symbolic bathing in a pool of water; enlightenment through being anointed on the head. Admission to the congregation was signified through being marked with the cross or receiving new garments and regeneration was indicated in the shape of the font (both tomb-like and womb-like). Thus the ritual was a fully embodied one that nevertheless was asserted to produce inner or spiritual transformation.

The origins of this ritual are uncertain. An emphasis on cleansing and the practice of full body immersion suggest parallels with Jewish ritual baths (*mikvaoth*), yet baptism's emphasis on internal rather than external defilement sets it apart. Baptism also appears to have become a ritual that was administered only once in a lifetime as a sign of joining a religious community, rather than a purificatory bath that could be repeated as often as need arose. In this respect, it was more like Jewish circumcision than with ritual bathing (cf. *Colossians* 2.11–13). While its purpose of conferring identity or membership also

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aligned it with other ancient induction rituals, the fact that its cleansing water bath was the central and not simply a preliminary act also distinguished it. Thus although Christian baptism shares some elements with other Greco-Roman rites of initiation or cleansing, it is also unique in certain key respects (Hellholm et al. 2011). Nevertheless, while other Greco-Roman rituals differed from Christian baptism in their practice and purpose, they must have had enough in common to prompt Tertullian to decry the ineffective water of idols, the ablutions associated with to the cults of Isis and Mithras, or the expiatory purifications undertaken by Apollinarian and Pelusian games (*On Baptism* 5).

Unlike other ablutions or ritual baths, baptism's effects were understood to be indelible. Those who were baptized and subsequently renounced or denied their faith were, in the eyes of the church, apostate. They were not simply returned to their prior status as non-believers and, in a sense, were both self-deniers as well as Christ-deniers. For this reason, Tertullian cautioned sponsors not to undertake that role before their charges were ready and able to make a full commitment to the social, moral, and spiritual demands of membership (*On Baptism* 18).

Prior to the fifth or sixth centuries, candidates for baptism mostly were adult converts. These individuals initially underwent a period of preparation that included basic religious instruction (catechesis) as well as physical and spiritual disciplines (e.g., fasting, exorcism, and abstinence from sexual intercourse). They were enrolled and named sponsors who could speak for their sincerity and good character. When they came to the end of their probationary phase and were judged to be worthy, candidates were admitted to the congregation of the faithful through a several-staged ritual that comprised a series of actions that typically included being disrobed, anointed, dunked in water, rerobed in white garments, and signed on the forehead with the mark of the cross. In many places, the newly-baptized received post-baptismal catechesis (sometimes called mystagogy) that explained the meaning of the rituals they had recently undergone. The administrators of the ritual were ordained clergy (bishops, presbyters, and deacons) and each played a distinct ceremonial role. The bishop, for example, was authorized to complete and confirm the rite with an imposition of hands while deaconesses assisted at the baptism of women (Jensen 2011b: 149–56).

Comprehensive surveys of early Christian baptism have analyzed the ritual in different times and places, assessing regional and chronological variation in patterns and expounding its varied theological principles and purposes (Ferguson 2009; Spinks 2006; Johnson 1989; Yarnold 1994; Kavanagh 1978; Riley 1974; Whitaker 1960). Until recently, these historians of Christian liturgy relied primarily, if not exclusively, on evidence gleaned from written sources: sermons, treatises, and descriptions of or instructions for actual practices. They rarely (or only summarily) attempted to coordinate and compare available physical artifacts with such documents. Other scholars, historians of art and architecture, concentrated their research on the construction and furnishings of Christian baptisteries and only generally or summarily analyzed the relationship between the design of the physical spaces and the rituals enacted within them (Ristow 1998; Davies 1962). Newer studies have attended to the archeology of baptism, aiming to interrogate the literary record by placing it in dialogue with relevant physical remains (Jensen 2011b; Ferguson 2009; De Blaauw 2008). These efforts have identified some points of divergence between documentary and physical evidence, including the means of applying water to the body (i.e., dunking versus pouring). Some also have raised the problem of ideal versus actual practices (Jensen 2012).

While these purpose-built structures provided discrete and functional shelters for the early Christian ritual, their overall plan and décor conveyed baptism's religious purposes and shaped its actual practice. In other words, the basic design elements of light, space, orientation, focus, and form created more than a context for ritual performance. These elements also influenced how baptism's actions were accomplished and how the participants experienced them. And, as the ritual was enacted within a local context or physical setting, it also was influenced by sensory elements that were particular to that place. Thus archaeology plays an important role in assessing the performance and meaning of the rite at a certain time or place (see also Chapter 22 and 23).

The First Centuries

The earliest evidence for Christian baptism comes mainly from documentary sources. These indicate that Christians initially baptized converts in natural settings that had sufficient water to allow for initiates to be fully immersed (e.g., rivers, lakes, or spring-fed pools). Among these sources are passages from the New Testament that indicate the use of natural settings for baptism: the Jordan River (*Mark* 1.9 and parallels), spring-fed pools, or roadside puddles (*John* 3.23; *Acts* 8.36–8). In other places, the New Testament sources are silent about the site or source of baptismal water (*Acts* 9.18, the baptism of Paul).

Although the first post-biblical witnesses to baptism are indefinite about the ritual's physical context, they imply the use of outdoor and naturally-available water. For example, the *Didache* (ca. 100) favors cold, running (or "living") water for the rite, yet makes an exception for warm or poured water if necessary (*Didache* 7.1–3). Justin Martyr (ca. 150) describes candidates being led to a place with water and, after their baptism, being escorted back to the place where the community had assembled (*1 Apology* 61.65). In his treatise on baptism, written at the turn of the third century, Tertullian insists that it is immaterial whether baptism is performed in the sea or a pond, river or fountain, cistern or tub and notes that Peter baptized in the Tiber just as John baptized in the Jordan (*On Baptism* 4.3). Elsewhere, Tertullian specifies that candidates renounce Satan within the assembly before they go to the water, implying a change of venue although not explicitly a move from indoors to outdoors (*On the Crown* 3). The *Apostolic Tradition*, traditionally ascribed to the early third-century bishop/theologian Hippolytus of Rome, but perhaps a fourth-century text (as some sections are now assumed to reflect a fourth-century document), likewise advises that candidates be brought to a place with water, away from the congregation, and that the water be pure and flowing (*Apostolic Tradition* 21.2). Such places could have included domestic *impluvia* (basins for collecting rain), or public or private baths, although only minimal evidence suggests this practice (cf. *Acts of Thomas* 26).

Some Greco-Roman cultic purificatory baths also appear to have been held outside, at least according to certain ancient documents. For example, initiates into the cult of Demeter at Eleusis first bathed in the sea near Athens or plunged into the River Illisos (Burkert 1985: 78; Graf 2011). Vergil quotes Aeneas as saying that he needed to be immersed in running river water before handling sacred objects (*Aeneid* 2.717–20). By contrast, Apuleius was conducted to the public baths for cleansing prior to his initiation into the Isis cult (*Metamorphoses* 11.23). Similarly, ancient Jewish ritual baths were

indoor and enclosed spaces, designed for complete submersion of the body, although it appears that access to fresh, running water was important. The Mishnah devoted an entire tractate, *Mikvaoth*, to these ritual baths and it opens by grading different sources of water according to their purity. Pond, rain, and well water fall on the lower end of the scale, while fresh, living waters (spring-fed) were preferred (*Miqvaoth* 1; Ferguson 2009: 63–65).

The parallels between these gradations and those cited by the *Didache* imply a common tradition or source. Yet Jewish ritual baths were for external cleansing and repeated as often as the body was contaminated by some kind of impure substance. Nevertheless, around the late first or second centuries CE, an initiatory bath (*tebilah*) began to be administered to Jewish converts, a practice recorded in the Talmud and that may have originated within Jewish sectarian communities (Jensen 2012: 47; Cohen 1994; Porton 1994: 60–1).

From Exterior to Interior Spaces: Purpose-Built Baptisteries

The earliest archeological evidence for baptism reveals that, by the mid-third century, it had been begun to be administered inside purpose-built chambers that were designed and designated solely – perhaps exclusively – for the rite. The evidence comes from the house church at Dura Europos (ca. 254 CE), which included a baptistery room. Like the other rooms in this formerly purely domestic structure, this relatively small rectangular space (approximately three by seven meters) was transformed for a ritual purpose. A rectangular font was installed at the west end that was roughly 1.6 meter long, one meter wide, and one meter deep. A canopy, composed of an arch and barrel vault, sheltered the font and was supported by two columns that rose along either side of the basin. The overall appearance looks somewhat like a Roman underground burial chamber (*hypogaeum*): a sarcophagus placed within a niche and surmounted by a painted arch (*arcosolium*). A small arched niche along the south wall probably served as a receptacle for anointing oils (McClendon 2011: 161).

The room was richly decorated with polychrome wall paintings (Figure 19.1). A scene of the Good Shepherd and his flock, with a smaller image of Adam and Eve, filled the lunette-shaped wall behind the font. The arch over the font was decorated with alternating sheaves of grapes, pomegranates, and stalks of wheat. The rest of the room's walls displayed biblical scenes. Although most of these paintings have not survived, those remaining depict Jesus stilling the storm and walking on the water, Jesus healing the paralytic, Jesus meeting the woman at the well (or the annunciation at the well), David slaying Goliath, and the five wise brides carrying lamps to the bridegroom's tent. Between its long wooden beams, the ceiling had white stars on a blue ground. Most of these images referred to some facet of the baptismal ritual or to a biblical story that prefigured one of its effects. For example, the brides may have signified the neophytes coming to the meet their spiritual spouse; the scene of David slaying Goliath alluded to the anointing of candidates as well as kings (Peppard 2012).

Although the baptistery at Dura is the oldest existing purpose-built baptismal space and, at present, an historical anomaly, it seems unlikely that it was unique; others must have existed that were like it. Nevertheless, parallel structures date no earlier than the fourth century, among them the monumental baptistery built in the 320s by Constantine I at Rome's Lateran Basilica. This octagonal structure, probably originally domed, included a centralized octagonal font, supported by eight porphyry columns with Corinthian

Figure 19.1 The Christian baptistery in Dura Europos, ca. 240 CE. Photo: Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection.

capitals with a connecting architrave (Brandt 2012). The architrave bears an eight-line poem reflecting on the spiritual benefits of baptism (trans. author):

> Here, born from fruitful seed is a sacred tribe to be consecrated – citizens which the Spirit draws from fertile waters.
>
> Plunge sinner, to be purified in the flow. Whom it receives old, the water makes new.
>
> No differences exist among those who are reborn – whom one font, one Spirit, one faith makes one.
>
> By virginal delivery, Mother Church bears children in the stream whom she conceives by the breath of God.
>
> If you wish to be innocent, be purified in the bath, whether you are burdened with ancestral sin or your own.
>
> This is the fountain of life, which washes the whole world, having found its origin in Christ's wound.
>
> Reborn ones, by this font have hope for the kingdom of Heaven. The blessed life does not admit those born only once.
>
> Neither the number nor the kind of your sins should frighten you. The one born in this river will be holy.

Other early baptistery structures were built for the cathedral basilicas in the major Christian centers: Milan, Jerusalem, and Antioch, as well as in many of Rome's titular and suburban churches. Presumably a baptistery was built for any church that was the primary seat of a bishop. Several cities had more than one baptistery and font, however, which suggests either competing cults or the gradual allowance for baptism in parish or suburban

churches, especially as the numbers of converts increased and baptism began to be administered soon after a child's birth (i.e., infant baptism). Some baptisteries appear within pilgrimage complexes, suggesting that individuals sought to be initiated at a shrine rather than the episcopal cathedral (Jensen 2011a). Countless remains of baptisteries from the fifth and sixth centuries have been excavated, catalogued, and studied and they are continuing to be discovered and published (Khatchatrian 1962; Ristow 1998; De Blaauw 2008).

Among the possible factors accounting for the construction of purpose-built indoor baptismal chambers is that spaces set apart from the larger assembly would have shielded the actions and words of the ritual from the observation or overhearing of the non-initiated, whilst also respecting recipients' modesty during the parts of the ritual which required them to be naked. Nevertheless, the buildings themselves also attested to the permanence, material wealth, and prestige of donors as well as communities (Brandt 2012).

Because the ritual was largely guarded from outsiders and it was understood that full comprehension of the rite depended on having undergone it, candidates probably had only a vague idea of what actually was to take place once they entered. Thus, most candidates probably had never entered these spaces before nor would they return again, unless they later became attendants or administrators of the ritual. This need for discretion as well as the identity-changing character of the rite also meant that these structures were used exclusively for baptism. Thus, the design and decoration of these spaces not only accommodated its component actions and shielded them from outsiders, but also underscored its particular meaning or purpose.

Coordinating Ritual Practices and Physical Spaces

The quality of the architecture and furnishings also reflected the values, prosperity, or social status of those who commissioned and financed the construction of these edifices. Perhaps the most famous example of this was the lavish endowments made by the Emperor Constantine to Rome's Lateran Baptistery. These included a solid gold *agnus dei* ("Lamb of God"), seven silver stags to pour water into the font, and nearly life-sized silver statues of Christ and John the Baptist (*Liber Pontificalis* 34).

Most early Christian baptisteries lacked such imperial endowments, but whether simple or sumptuous, the essential or defining feature of these baptismal chambers was the pool of water, which was normally placed in the center of the space and often protected by a canopy (*ciborium*) supported upon columns. The size and shape of these chambers varied widely from place to place, along with the form, dimensions, and depths of the fonts within them. Some were monumental whilst others were modest. Some were augmented with niches or annexes perhaps serving as changing rooms or places for post-baptismal anointing. Some of their fonts were deep enough to submerge the whole body but most were shallow, probably permitting a kneeling recipient only to have water poured over her or his head. Although most of the archeological remains are limited to surface-level evidence, exceptional surviving examples show that floors, fonts, walls, and ceilings were often covered with colorful paintings and mosaics. In addition to varying size, shape, and interior decor, other distinctive features included the physical relationship of the chambers to their related churches or shrines. While many were detached or stood at a small distance, others shared walls, connecting doors, or intermediary rooms.

Because the design and decoration of these spaces directly reflected and informed the ceremonies that took place within them, analysis of the physical environment is crucial for historical reconstruction of the ritual in particular times and places. Although few remains can be directly synchronized with corresponding literary documents, coordinating particular monuments with geographically or chronologically relevant textual evidence can help to illuminate the distinct ways that Christian initiation was conducted in different times or regions of the ancient world. Attending to available ritual descriptions and noting apparent continuities or divergences helps historians to better understand what these initiatory rites signified in terms of personal and corporate religious identity and broadly engenders a more complex understanding of the enacted and experienced reality of lived religious practices.

Christian baptism was a profoundly corporeal experience; it included undressing, anointing, dunking, and re-garbing the body. In addition to these intimate activities, the direction and patterns of movement that guided participants through the space also marked the stages of their transformation. They came to a designated, set-apart place; they crossed its boundaries, moving from porch to entrance to interior; they went down into, were covered with, and emerged from a pool of water; they crossed to a place where their initiation was concluded with rituals of confirmation or sealing. At the conclusion of the rite, they exited the space and traversed a brief distance to the hall where the assembled community awaited them. All these features – the shape, dimension, orientation, access points, floor plan, and furnishings of baptismal chambers – served and shaped Christian initiation, instantiated its purposes, and expressed its values.

Placement and Orientation of Baptistery Chambers Relative to Basilicas

Dura Europos' baptistery was originally an ordinary domestic room that opened off a central courtyard. It had two doors, one that communicated with this courtyard and one that connected the baptistery to a small room that – at its other end – had a door into the larger assembly room. In a hypothetical reconstruction of the rite, candidates would enter from the courtyard and exit into this connecting, transitional room. An intermediary space, it might have been used for gathering and re-robing of candidates, or even the last steps in the ritual itself, such as an imposition of hands or signing with the cross. Once baptized they could join their fellow Christians in the main hall and join the eucharistic liturgy from which they had been barred prior to their initiation.

Later, fourth- through sixth-century baptisteries either were rooms annexed to churches or constructed at a small distance away. These distinctions were largely regional; with a few exceptions, Italian and Gallican baptisteries were typically freestanding while those in Africa, Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria incorporated into the church complex. For example, Rome's Lateran baptistery was octagonal and set a slight distance behind the basilica. Similarly, Ambrose's baptistery at Milan – the site of Augustine's initiation – also stood at a short distance, also just behind the apse of the cathedral.

The two Ravenna baptisteries also were freestanding and octagonal in design. Similar Italian examples are found at Grado, Novara, Albenga, and Nocera Superiore. By contrast, Cyrus's Kourion baptistery was set at the northwest side of the cathedral, whereas the

baptistery of St. John in Ephesus was a chamber incorporated into the north part of the ecclesial complex. Gallican baptisteries tended to follow the Italian pattern and include the partially octagonal structure at Fréjus, as well as the rectilinear examples at Riez and Poitiers. A striking exception to these regional patterns is the monumental sixth-century octagonal baptistery at Qal'at Sim'an. In this instance, the font was placed to the side, within the ambulatory, rather than in the center of the building.

When these later baptismal chambers were directly attached to basilica halls, they tended to be small, rectangular rooms, found to the right or left of the narthex, which was just behind, or to the right or left of the apse. They often adjoined small apsed rooms that might have served as classrooms for catechumens or special places for the imposition of hands or final anointing (a *consignatorium*). In a few instances they opened off the side aisle or even might be found within the counter-apse of a church and thus open to the main nave (e.g., in Tunisia's Bulla Regia basilica).

Occasionally, the cella of a former pagan temple was converted into a baptistery, while the forecourt was transformed into the main hall of a basilica (e.g., Tunisia's Thurburbo Maius or the Servus basilica in Sbeitla). Such placement might have been simply practical reuse of available space, but it might also have signaled the centrality of the initiatory ritual for the Christian faithful as well as the church's assertion of power and superiority over its former rivals.

The relationship of baptistery chamber to church building would have affected the actions of the ritual and perhaps relayed certain aspects of congregational identity. While a detached building would have been visibly prominent to outsiders, a small chamber nestled into the footprint of a surrounding basilica complex would have been more-or-less indistinguishable from the exterior. Prominent and monumental ritual spaces reflect the life-transforming power of the rituals held within them. More modest interior and adjoining rooms suggest that the rite is but one part of a larger, encompassing religious practice.

An example of this architectural contrast is clear in the roughly contemporary baptisteries of Milan and Hippo. In Milan, the newly baptized had to leave the baptistery and go a few meters to the church, and thus might have experienced their brief transition from baptistery to church as a passage from one life to another. In Hippo, the newly baptized could enter the side aisle of the basilica almost directly, and thus could have experienced their movements as taking them from one place (and one status) within the church to another. The Milanese congregation was physically separated from the ritual, while in Hippo they would have been able to overhear and perhaps even glimpse parts of the ritual that was going on in the next room. Such structural differences could have imparted or reinforced divergent sensibilities about personal transformation or group identity; whether the initiation is accomplished in an evening or is just the first important step in his or her religious formation.

Finally, the existence of a baptismal font suggests that its associated church building was a cathedral, since in antiquity only a bishop was authorized to baptize. Yet, archeological evidence shows that many ancient cities had two or more contemporary baptisteries. Although the presence of multiple fonts in a single urban area implies competing groups (e.g., Donatists, Arians, or various Gnostic groups), it also seems plausible that in some places lower clergy – especially presbyters – were authorized to baptize. This would have been a practical solution for growing communities, or those divided by

ethnic or linguistic diversity, or even the gradual shift away from adult candidates toward the baptism of infants shortly after birth.

Moreover, the inclusion of baptismal fonts in pilgrimage churches suggests that people came from some distance to be baptized at a famous shrine. An exceptional example is the huge baptistery at the shrine of Simeon Stylites (Qal'at Sim'an). This seems to be a likely explanation for baptisteries in Palestine, at stops along the Holy Land pilgrimage route (Day 2007). Such baptisms would have been administered by a local bishop, and the risks of dying unbaptized whilst on an arduous journey were offset by the benefits of baptism "ad sanctos". Alternative rituals of ablution may also have been practiced at these sites (Jensen 2011a).

Font Depths and Administration of Water

The application of water lies at the heart of the Christian baptismal ritual. The very word "baptizo" denotes dunking or immersion in water (Ferguson 2009: 38–55). Before the candidates entered the font the water was exorcised and blessed. The invocation of the Holy Spirit affirmed that this washing was quite different from an ordinary bath. It cleansed the body spiritually and the spirit corporeally (Tertullian, *On Baptism* 4). Although some converts could receive sickbed, emergency baptism by sprinkling (Cyprian, *Letters* 69), the normal practice was to immerse the naked body in a water-filled basin.

As noted above, the archeological evidence shows a striking variance in font design and decoration. Fonts also differed significantly in size and depth. Some were small and relatively shallow; others were broad and, occasionally, quite deep. One of the largest is the fifth-century baptistery at Nocera Superiore, which was 5.5 meters across, whilst only 1 meter in depth. On the small end of the scale is the baptismal font in Belalis Maior (Tunisia), which is 50 centimeters in diameter and 50 centimeters deep. Fonts often were equipped with steps to facilitate candidates climbing in and out while others appear to lack such aids. Some fonts were raised from the floor or surrounded by low walls, presumably to contain the water. Others were sunk below floor levels or even cut directly into the bedrock.

The Dura Europos font is about 1.6 meters long by 1 meter wide, with a depth of slightly less than 1 meter – enough to permit a candidate to be submerged. Its rectangular shape also suggests a tomb or even a bathtub. The depths of other surviving fonts from the fourth and fifth centuries range between 30 centimeters and 1.8 meters, with an average depth of roughly 1 meter. For example, the late fourth-century octagonal font in Milan seems to have been both fairly shallow whilst also very wide (5 meters in diameter and 55 centimeters deep). Similarly, the early fifth-century round piscina in Naples, at San Giovanni in Fonte, is even shallower and far smaller, less than one half meter (45 centimeters) in depth and about 2 meters in diameter.

Some surviving early Christian documents instruct the administrant to place his right hand on the candidate's head and, in one instance, clearly as a way to facilitate baptismal dunking (*Apostolic Tradition* 21.14; John Chrysostom, *Catecheses* 2.26; and Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catecheses* 14.18–9). Yet the shallowness of certain fonts indicates that they were not used for actual submersion. It seems more likely that individuals entered

the font, knelt, and had water poured over their heads. Such an action is supported by the iconography of baptism, found in the Roman catacombs and on fourth-century Christian sarcophagi, which show the recipient (normally Jesus) standing ankle-deep in a stream, with a column of water cascading from overhead. In almost every image, the baptizer has placed his right hand on the head of the candidate, perhaps an allusion to the ritual of the imposition of hands. In some instances, the baptizer appears to be holding a vessel that could have been used for the administration of the water.

Other early fonts were deep enough to accommodate submersion of neophytes. One striking example, the fifth- or sixth-century cross-shaped font at Tunisia's Bulla Regia, was designed with a double set of five steps into and out of a well that was at approximately 1.4 meters deep (Figure 19.2). Yet because of the small space at the bottom of the well, most adults probably would have had to kneel or perhaps even curl up into a fetal position to get their heads under the water. They might have been assisted by a deacon, standing next to them but in the shallower (and possibly dry) arms of the cross.

Some scholars have supposed that smaller fonts were especially designed for infants or young children and argue for a gradual shift from large and deep to small and shallow and aligned with an evolutionary emergence of infant baptism as a common practice (Schneider 2011). Against this generalization are examples of small or shallow fonts that date to the earlier period, like the small fourth-century font at Thurburbo Maius in

Figure 19.2 Four North African baptismal fonts. Top left, baptistery at Hippo Regius, 4th c. Top right, baptistery at Bulla Regia, 6th c. Lower left, baptistery at Musti, possibly 4th c. Lower right, font of Vitalis from Sufetula, 5-6th c. Photos by Robin Jensen.

Tunisia, and large Byzantine-era fonts like the ones at Bir Ftouha, or the cruciform and deep font at St. John's in Ephesus, which were as large as any from two centuries earlier and would have accommodated immersion of adults well into the seventh century.

Thus, the size or depth of a baptismal font cannot, by itself, offer any definitive assistance in establishing where or when infant baptism became the norm. If anything, the archeological evidence implies that adult baptism continued until well into the early Byzantine era. The eventual appearance of raised fonts in the early Middle Ages seems most conducive to the baptism of infants, particularly as such fonts would not have required an administrator to bend down to immerse a child in a floor-level font.

Means for providing the water seems, similarly, to have been varied. Some baptisteries were equipped with systems to fill and drain the fonts. The font at Carthage's Dermech I, for example, has a clearly visible drain in the west side of the well. A cistern that is still visible in the ambulatory's north aisle could have fed a pipe in its northeast side. The font at Musti (Tunisia) appears to have been filled from a large rainwater receptacle containing a hole for water to run into a channel set into the floor and leading to the font (Figure 19.2, lower left). Other fonts, like the Lateran Baptistery, were built over existing bath complexes. Among these were Carthage's Bir Ftouha and Algeria's Cuicul (Djémila). These structures could have made use of existing systems to supply and to drain water, either into the town sewer or – perhaps because the water was consecrated – into a soak-away tank. Cuicul's baptistery still has a bath structure and latrine directly outside its main entrance, possibly for the use of candidates prior to their undergoing the ritual. The Lateran font had silver stags for water spouts (see above) while a font at Milan supposedly was equipped with an apparatus that simulated rain (see above). Many fonts would have been filled or emptied with buckets.

Additional Structures and Apparatus

Canopies frequently covered baptismal fonts, most of them made of stone and supported by four columns. In many respects, these canopies were like those raised over church altars and martyrs' tombs and so indicate that fonts were perceived as a type of shrine and needed to be protected from pollutants. Moreover, this continuity of design linked the ritual of baptism both with the eucharist and the cult of saints. Based on the existence of slots in the stones that surrounded them, it seems that in addition to these canopies, some fonts must have been set off by stone or wooden screens. It is also possible that curtains hung between the columns, further separating the font from the rest of the space and perhaps also providing some privacy for the ritual immersion.

As noted above, steps often gave access into and out of fonts. Although steps allowed easy access down into the central well and out again, they also may have had a symbolic function. Three steps could indicate the three days Christ spent in the tomb or even the Persons of the Trinity. Some steps were more like encircling interior benches while others were on opposite ends of the font. The latter type clearly directed the candidates down (in) and up (out), but if they were also oriented from west to east, they could also have symbolized movement from darkness to dawn (sunset to sunrise) and thus from death to rebirth.

Footbaths also occurred in baptisteries in certain parts of the world, notably northern Italy (Milan) and Gaul (Brandt 2003). In Milan, this ritual, administered by the bishop,

concluded the bath, as the words of Jesus to Peter (*John* 13.8) were understood to be a mandate for all Christians, "If I do not wash [your feet], you have no part in me" (Ambrose, *Sacrament* 3.1.7; cf. Augustine, *Letters* 55.33).

Although we have no evidence of lamps or other light sources in baptisteries, the documentary evidence emphasizes the symbolic importance of light in the rituals. Candidates were presented with lit tapers or torches as they processed from baptistery to church and the decoration of baptisteries often included representations of candles or lamps (Jensen 2012: 128–35; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatechesis* 1). The best-preserved painting in the Dura Europos baptistery shows the five wise brides carrying their lamps to the tent of the bridegroom (*Matthew* 25.1–13; cf. Peppard 2012; Serra 2006). Sources of light would have been needed (e.g., tapers or torches), when baptism likely took place at night. By the mid-fourth century, baptism began to be regularly celebrated during the Easter vigil in many places, including Hippo, Jerusalem, and Milan (Bradshaw 1995). The symbolism of light was crucial to the idea of baptism as illumination (Gregory of Nazianzen, *Oration* 40.26).

The Symbolism of Baptistery Design and Décor

Reminders of the original outdoor venues for the ritual were retained in many baptisteries, along with some efforts to maintain the administration of fresh, running water. Most fourth- and fifth-century baptismal pools were equipped with drains and, in some cases, with pipe or channels that supplied the water from nearby cisterns. Thus, the traditional preference for "living water" was satisfied by special plumbing fixtures. Many ancient baptisteries, including Rome's Lateran Baptistery, were built over existing bath structures, usually in private houses, and these would have had pre-existing systems for both piping in and draining water. Certain fonts resembled fountains (*nymphaea*) and a few even were outfitted with some kind of apparatus that would create displays of running water, like the seven silver stag water spouts that Constantine supposedly donated to the Lateran Baptistery (*Liber pontificalis* 34; Styger 1933: 50–4; Brandt 2005: 131–56). Eustorgius of Milan (343–50) apparently even equipped the baptismal font of San Stefano with a device to simulate falling rain (Ennodius of Pavia, *Carmina* 2.149; Jensen 2011b: 194–5). Thus springs, running streams, and even rain was simulated to heighten the allusion to an outdoor context.

The decoration of baptisteries also supported this illusion. Fonts, especially those from North Africa, were often covered with polychrome mosaic depicting all manner of aquatic life, birds, fruit-bearing trees, flowers, and vines (Figure 19.2). Some featured sheep and shepherds in meadows (evoking Psalm 23) and deer coming to drink at streams (evoking Psalm 42). Ceilings or domes were frequently adorned with brightly-colored stars against a dark blue background. Although this sort of decoration would have been standard for Roman garden pools (*piscinae*) or arched fountains (*nymphaea*), its incorporation in a baptistery recalled baptism's original, natural setting whilst simultaneously symbolizing the promise of a renewed, Edenic garden. Thus the decoration of baptismal spaces called the mind both back to the time when baptism was an outdoor event and forward to the ultimate restoration of paradise.

The structural resemblance between the Dura font and a Roman burial chamber has a parallel in the similarity between freestanding baptisteries and imperial mausolea, such as

Diocletian's mausoleum at Split or Helena's at Rome. These free-standing, round or octagonal structures, if not precisely architectural prototypes were enough like the early-fourth century Lateran Baptistery or the baptisteries at Milan to imagine that those who entered might think that they were going into some kind of tomb. Ambrose of Milan specifically described his font as being tomb-like (*Sacraments* 2.19; 3.1). The resemblance of the mid-fourth century mausoleum of Constantine's daughter to a baptistery led to its long being identified as one. That initiates understood that baptism was a kind of burial (of an old self) and rebirth thus is expressed in this architectural connection.

While freestanding baptisteries may have looked like mausolea, they also shared characteristics with Roman bath structures. Many Roman baths contained vaulted and centralized rooms with plunge pools and, in fact, a number of early Christian baptisteries (e.g., the Lateran baptistery and the baptistery at Cuicul in Algeria) were built over pre-existing bath structures and made use of the plumbing associated with them. Thus both structural and functional parallels to baths could have underlined the cleansing aspects of the baptismal ritual within early Christianity (Jensen 2011b: 234–7).

Other aspects of baptismal architecture show regional variations as well as chronological development. Font shapes especially bear a remarkable variety, especially in North Africa and in the eastern Roman provinces. They range from rectangular to round, hexagonal to cruciform, and from four- to eight-lobed. Italian fonts tend to be round, octagonal or hexagonal, while cruciform fonts more typically appear in North Africa, Syria, Jordan, Greece, or Asia Minor. African fonts are also round and polygonal, but poly-lobed fonts are more common in Tunisia and Algeria than across the Mediterranean to the north.

Many of these shapes had could have had symbolic significance. The octagon, like the octagonal building, might have referred to the "ogdoad" or the eighth day – the first day of the new creation (Jensen 2011b: 244–7; Staats 1972). A poem of eight couplets, attributed to Ambrose, attests to the symbolic significance of the octagonal plan at Milan. It begins, "The eight-sided temple has risen for sacred purpose; the eight-sided font is worthy for the task. It is seemly that the baptismal hall should arise in this number, by which true health has returned to the people" (*CIL* 5.617.2). A cruciform font alludes to baptism as sharing in the death (and resurrection) of Christ (cf. *Romans* 6). Round or labial-shaped fonts might symbolize the womb or birth canal and thus baptism as new birth (Jensen 2011b: 247–51; Bedard 1951).

Decorative schemes are similarly varied and intentional in regard to their symbolic purpose (Dael 1981). Fonts basins, floors, walls, and even ceilings were be covered with figurative or non-figurative designs in mosaic and some of these decorations have survived, as at Dura Europos, Naples, Ravenna, and Albenga in Italy, Butrint (Albania), and the North African examples at Cuicul, Kélibia, Bekalta, and La Skhira. Such designs included biblical narrative scenes that had baptismal allusions (e.g., Jesus with the woman at the well, Jesus walking on water – at both Dura and Naples), images of sheep and shepherds or deer coming to drink at fountains, or rich designs of sea life, birds, flowers, fruit-bearing trees, and vines. These decorations might have echoed parts of the baptismal liturgy, such as the singing of Psalms 23 or 42, or they might have reflected the belief that baptism effected a hoped-for return to an original paradise.

The famous Ravenna baptisteries both depict Jesus' baptism by John in their dome mosaics. The dove of the Holy Spirit and a personification of the Jordan River appear in

Figure 19.3 Dome mosaic, baptistery of Sta. Restituta, Naples, early 5th century CE. Photo by Robin Jensen.

these scenes. Surrounding them are processing apostles carrying their crowns. The Naples baptistery dome shows the hand of God, reaching out of a starry sky to present such a crown to the neophyte (Figure 19.3). Although we cannot know who developed or approved the designs (e.g., a donor, a bishop, or a local artists' workshop), we may be confident that the physical setting altered or affected the practice of the rite and transmitted messages about its meaning and benefits.

Thus this profoundly corporeal ritual was enacted within space and time. Its surroundings both reflected its purpose and shaped its practice. Bodies were anointed and bathed, undressed and reclothed. They moved through spaces that were designed to symbolize the significance of the transformation that the ritual promised those who received it: to be cleansed and healed, incorporated into a community, regenerated and illuminated.

Guide to Further Reading

An overview of (exclusively) non-Christian initiatory rituals is given by Burkert (2004).

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CHAPTER 20

Oracular Shrines as Places of Religious Experience

Julia Kindt

Greco-Roman Oracles: The Archaeological Evidence

When we consider what it might have been like to visit an oracle in the ancient world, what probably comes to mind are the famous responses allegedly delivered at certain oracular shrines – most notably, perhaps, the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. We may, for example, think of the answer given to Croesus that if he went to war against the Persians, he would destroy a great empire – which ultimately turned out to be his own (Herodotus 1.53). Or the so-called "wooden wall oracle" delivered to the Athenians prior to the battle of Salamis, which Themistocles interpreted to support his plan to build a strong fleet (see 7.141). Given that the literary evidence from Herodotus to Plutarch and Pausanias features a very large number of such astonishing predictions and their subsequent fulfillment, are we to assume that a visit to an oracular sanctuary really involved the delivery of such prophecies? What was it like to visit such a shrine? And what can the archaeological evidence reveal about oracular sanctuaries?

Until relatively recently, the picture of the great oracular institutions of the Greco-Roman world sketched in classical scholarship was based almost exclusively on the literary evidence (see e.g., Fontenrose 1978). The archaeological remains of these shrines rarely received attention beyond specialist archaeological studies and the broader scholarly debate about the role of some of the sanctuaries, such as Delphi, Olympia, Dodona and Delos, in the process of Greek state formation (see below, with references).

This selective use of evidence is all the more unfortunate because the archaeological evidence presents a rich picture of these shrines that complements, and occasionally even challenges, that of the literary. In particular, many of the large inter-urban sanctuaries are well excavated and documented. Archaeology has revealed the remains of altars, temples, treasuries, monuments and other architectural infrastructure, providing insights into the spatial layout and topographical development of these shrines and reflecting their standing

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within the wider sacred landscape of ancient Greece and Italy. A considerable number of the smaller oracular shrines, however, are either not (yet) excavated or classical scholars have so far been unable to locate their remains.

More recently, however, the material side of oracular divination has attracted new interest (e.g., Dieterle 2007; Scott 2010; Friese 2010). Such studies have synthesized information so far largely buried in excavation reports. They have also called attention to the kind of information about these sanctuaries that only the material evidence can provide, shedding new light on their roles as places of religious experience. In fact, as we will see, the material evidence significantly changes our understanding of what we consider oracular sanctuaries to be and alters our insight into what it was like to visit such a shrine. I shall start with a brief survey of oracular divination as practiced at Greco-Roman sanctuaries, for this aspect brings us right to the core of the kind of experience typically on offer at these shrines.

A World Full of Oracles

Oracular shrines were ubiquitous and important elements of the religious landscape of the ancient Mediterranean world (see Curnow 2004 for an overview). The Greek world alone featured several oracular institutions with a supra-regional reputation (e.g., Delphi, Dodona, Didyma and Claros) as well as a very large number of smaller oracular sanctuaries, some of which we know only from literary evidence. Oracular shrines were less popular in the Roman world, which seems to have relied on other forms of divination (haruspicy, augury); but here, too, a large number of oracular shrines existed, both within the city of Rome (e.g., the temple of Apollo on the Palatine housing the famous Sibylline prophecies), in other regions of Italy (e.g., the famous oracle at the temple of Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste; Faunus at Albunea; Belenus at Aquileia), and in the Latin-speaking provinces (e.g., the Gallicenae in northern Gaul). Oracular divination was also popular in ancient Babylon (see e.g., Maul 2007), in other Near Eastern cultures, and beyond. Given this ubiquity of oracular sanctuaries it is fair to say that oracular divination was a central feature of the religious landscape of the ancient world.

Some of these sanctuaries were located within the territory of individual cities. Thebes, for example, featured no fewer than five oracular shrines, including the famous oracle of Apollo Ismenios where priests practiced pyromancy (the interpretation of the way the flames flickered at sacrifice), as well as the lesser-known oracles of Teiresias and of Apollo Spodios. There was also an oracle of Amphiaraos, similar to the better-known one at Oropos, housed in an open-air sanctuary. These five shrines offered different types of divination and probably addressed different needs (see Symeonoglou 1985). The Theban oracular shrines were part of the much larger group of so-called "intra-urban" sanctuaries, which also encompassed a variety of other shrines where divination was not a specialty.

Other shrines, such as the sanctuary housing the oracle of the Sibyl of Cumae, a Greek colony in southern central Italy, were within walking distance of their controlling polis and therefore belong to the group of suburban sanctuaries. A third group was situated in marginal locations at a considerable distance away from major poleis. These are known as "extra-urban". Their remote location (frequently at a considerable distance from the controlling city or cities, with their own interests and ideologies) enhanced their appeal

to a much broader group of "clients" seeking to obtain divine advice. The extra-urban (or inter-state) category is by far the biggest group of oracular shrines and includes the famous oracular institutions of the ancient Greek world mentioned above.

A variety of divinatory rituals were practiced at these sanctuaries. Incubation oracles promised the revelation of knowledge through dreams, in which the divinity itself might appear and speak (oneiromancy). Many of these were healing sanctuaries. Others featured various forms of "technical" or "inductive" divination, where inferences were made by specialists from specific types of "signs", such as the flight, behavior or call of birds (ornithomancy), the movement of fish (ichthyomancy), or whether objects thrown into water floated or sank (pegomancy). At Lanuvium, a city on the Via Appia between Aricia and Tres Tabernae renowned for its wealth of sanctuaries, the quality of the forthcoming harvest was inferred from the conduct of an oracular snake (see Propertius 4.8.3–14; Rein 1919).

The most prestigious and authoritative form of prophecy in the ancient world, however, remained the inspired divination as practiced at Delphi – in many ways the prototypical oracular shrine. Here the god Apollo was believed to speak through an inspired medium (the Pythia). But not all Greek sanctuaries had Apollo as their patron divinity: other gods and heroes (Trophonios, Amphiaraos) were also believed to reveal knowledge not otherwise accessible to human beings. Healing sanctuaries typically featured Asklepios, the god of healing. Overall, Roman oracles showed a distinctively Roman flavor in their choice of oracular divinity (e.g., Hercules, Fortuna). The preferred method of oracular divination there was the casting of lots (cleromancy).

Oracular Shrines within the Greco-Roman System of Divination

Oracular shrines held a special position in the larger system of Greco-Roman divination; they were institutionalized versions of widespread divinatory practices, and typically featured specialized personnel ("priests"), special rituals, and some degree of monumentalization. There were also a number of semi-institutionalized oracles, such as the numerous lot oracles, which were set up in public spaces in the cities of Roman Asia Minor during the High Empire (Nollé 2007). In most cases, these oracles were not attached to a sanctuary but consisted simply of a large block of stone inscribed with a set of ready-made oracular responses. Each client selected one of these answers by calling upon "chance", i.e., by rolling dice or knuckle-bones. With the spread of literacy, any number of collections of oracular responses circulated purporting to derive from a particular shrine or prophetic figure, such as Linos or Musaios.

Compared to migrant seers and prophets, who offered divination on the move and more readily acquired a reputation for fraud, oracular shrines were regarded as authorized and authoritative sources of prophecy, particularly if they operated with inspired divination. At the same time, however, the influence of the shrines was limited by the fact that they could intervene only when consulted. In order to benefit from divine knowledge, one had to make a deliberate decision to visit an oracular shrine, frequently involving long-distance travel and considerable expense.

Many aspects of the kind of religious experience typically associated with a visit to an oracular sanctuary will have depended upon the specific divinatory ritual practiced at a given institution. To consult one of the numerous incubation oracles, such as the oracle of Amphiaraos at Oropos or the oracle of Asklepios at Epidauros, involved a very different kind of religious experience and level of physical involvement in the divinatory process from (let's say) the consultation of the Teiresias oracle at Thebes, which relied on ornithomancy or the consultation of the lot oracle at Praeneste. Moreover, it made a difference whether the shrine was in one's own home community or whether extensive travel was involved in order to reach a high-status institution such as Delphi on time (the oracle was open for business only on certain days).

Current scholarship tends to focus on premier oracles. This is due at least in part to the fact that they are well-excavated and widely-published, allowing the student of Greek and Roman religion to trace the development of the site over time. It would be desirable for more attention now to be paid to the evidence from smaller oracular shrines, insofar as they can be traced archaeologically.

Compared to those of Greece, Roman/Italian oracular sanctuaries, both individually and as sets, have been insufficiently studied (but see Kähler 1958; Coarelli 1978; Champeaux 1990a,b; Merz 2001). Moreover, while the study of Roman divination is thriving, most of the new impulses in research on oracular sanctuaries stems from work on Greek oracular shrines (see below). It remains to be seen how far the concepts and models developed for ancient Greece can be applied to the study of Roman oracular sanctuaries.

Despite significant differences between the religious experiences associated with different kinds of oracular shrines, *all* such institutions served as focal points in the sacred landscape of the ancient world. These were special places of human–divine communication, where human uncertainty and the desire to know, and if possible control, the unknown and unknowable were brought into contact, direct or indirect, with divine knowledge regarding past, present, and future events. In Greco-Roman thought and literature, some premier sanctuaries came to model this communicative relationship, insofar as utterances attributed to other oracular shrines or even to itinerant seers adopted their typical forms (e.g., by featuring the famous oracular ambiguity of Delphic prophecy). These predictions, however, should be considered not so much "forgeries" as representations of a complex if idealized divine–human communication.

The Mantic Experience

What can the material evidence reveal about what it was like to visit such a special place of human–divine contact? Perhaps surprisingly, we know relatively little about the mantic ritual itself, with a few notable exceptions. At the same time, the archaeological remains do shed light on a number of important aspects of the oracular experience as well as on various parallel cultural practices.

To start with, the material evidence can tell us something about the geographical origins of those visiting a particular oracle. In particular, the numerous votive dedications found in oracular shrines provide rich information about the people who frequented these sanctuaries. Other clues can be deduced from the regional style of monumental

dedications (see e.g., Jacquemin 1999: 37–79). It would be desirable to have a systematic study of the origins of visitors to select oracular shrines analogous to that by Kilian-Dirlmeier for some Greek sanctuaries in the early Archaic period (1985; see e.g., Wescoat and Ousterhout 2012). This could provide not only a more nuanced picture of the different "catchment areas" of individual oracle sites (moving beyond the schematic distinction between "local", "regional", and "panhellenic" shrines) but also complement what we already know from literary evidence about foreign (non-Greek and non-Roman) delegations to individual oracular institutions.

Then again, the material record provides reliable information about the concerns that induced those seeking to benefit from divine knowledge to visit an oracular sanctuary. For example, numerous questions have been found in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, a remote sanctuary in the region of Epirus in northwestern Greece (see e.g., *SEG* 43.318–41; 47.818–22; 49.637–41 and the full collection in Lhôte 2006: 29–325; also Dieterle 2007: 345–53; Eidinow 2007: 72–124). Questions put to Zeus were written on small lead tablets (Figure 20.1). Most of those that have been recovered date from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE; some had been folded over, others had been used more than once in a divinatory ritual employing lots (see the discussion in Lhôte 2006: 1–21; Dieterle 2007: 70–85).

The questions put to Zeus at Dodona were mostly of a personal and practical nature: about offspring (*SEG* 19.426), whether a certain Dorkilos stole the cloth (19.429), whether to keep cattle (Collitz et al. 1884–1915: no. 1559), become a bronze smith (*SEG* 15.403), marry a particular woman (19.431), or marry at all (15.396). By comparison with the very large number of such "private" inquiries, relatively few official questions on behalf of polis communities have been recovered (but see Dieterle 2007: 79–80). As manifestations of personal religiosity, the tablets from Dodona reveal a dimension of religious practice in ancient Greece that falls outside the scope of polis religion (see Kindt 2012: 36–54).

Moreover, almost all these questions concern worries about concrete, immediate problems of everyday life. The oracular shrine at Dodona emerges as an aid in personal

Figure 20.1 Lead tablet from Dodona, enquiring to which god to sacrifice. Copyright AAAC Ltd.

decision-making rather than an institution focused on long-term predictions, which is the impression of Delphi given in Attic tragedy. Many of the questions can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no"; Esther Eidinow has identified as a motivating force behind them the desire to address and control uncertainty and risk (2007).

The evidence of the lead tablets from Dodona thus corrects the picture given by Greco-Roman literary sources of the unerring predictive capacities of premier oracular shrines. What are we to make of this apparent discrepancy? Inscriptions from other oracular sanctuaries confirm the pragmatic character of oracular divination (see e.g., *Fouilles de Delphe* 3.1.560; *SEG* 9.72 – both from Delphi). The famous oracular responses of Greco-Roman literature seem to be largely literary fictions and need to be understood not as accounts of actual responses but as aspects of a cultural discourse concerning the possibilities and limits of the divine–human communication institutionalized in premier oracles. This also applies to many of the famous "political oracles", which should be interpreted first in the ideological and historiographic contexts in which they feature before general statements about the role of oracles in Greek politics can be made.

Let us turn now to practicalities. What happened when you put your question to an oracle? Sadly, neither the literary nor the material evidence provides straightforward answers here. Much would have depended upon the kind of divination practiced at a given shrine. Excavations at the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros have revealed four slabs, dating from the fourth century BCE, that contain numerous stories relating to the god's healing powers and give some insight into what occurred during a visit (*IG* 4.121–4). An example:

"A dumb boy. He came to the sanctuary concerning his voice. When he had performed the preliminary sacrifice, and completed the accustomed ritual, after this the servant who brings the fire for the god, looking at the boy's father asked him to promise to make the thank offering sacrifice for the cure within the year, if he got what he had come for. The boy suddenly said 'I promise'. His father was amazed and asked him to say it again. The boy said it again, and after this was healthy." (Transl. Tomlinson 1983: 20)

The inscription gives us some understanding of the procedure at this oracular shrine in terms of sacrifices, preliminary rituals, etc. but is quite vague about the actual procedures involved: was the boy "cured" merely by being asked the right question in an ominous setting?

A similar picture emerges from Pausanias' account of the procedure at the oracle of Trophonios at Lebadeia (an account apparently based on first-hand experience: Pausanias 39.5–14): Again a number of purification rituals as well as preliminary sacrifices and prayers are needed before the enquirer is admitted to the oracle. He must also drink from two fountains, one of which will cause him to forget all present thoughts, one of which will allow him to remember what he learns once he has descended into the cave housing the oracle. Once down there, the enquirer must crawl on his back through a narrow hole into a second enclosure, where he learns about the future – as Pausanias ominously states – either in the form of a vision or by hearing.

For the oracle of Apollo at Delphi there is an long-standing and continuing debate about a chasm, vapors, and the nature of the Pythia's inspiration. Although the existence of these geological features has been dismissed by Fontenrose and others (Fontenrose 1978: 196–239), the debate has been revived by recent geological studies of the area suggesting the presence of fault-lines and light hydrocarbon gases, which are known to

have hallucinogenic effects (see e.g., De Boer, Hale, and Chanton 2001). More research on these faults at Delphi and other oracular sanctuaries mentioning the existence of "sweet vapors" will be necessary to convince those classical scholars who (like the author of this contribution) remain sceptical of their relevance for understanding oracular divination at Delphi and elsewhere.

It is more likely that the question of the presence of chasm and vapors should be considered in the context of the second-century debate over the legitimacy and possibilities of oracular divination described by Bendlin (2011), rather than real ritual as practiced at Delphi. The existence of *pneuma* emerging from the ground at Delphi plays an important role in Plutarch's *The Obsolence of Oracles* (51.438A) and in other sources dating from the same period; yet these sources are part of a much broader conversation about "the uses and disadvantages of divination", a conversation that should ultimately be seen in the context of "wider behavioral and communicative changes among the provincial elites" (Bendlin 20011: 242).

What the epigraphic evidence can reveal rather well are the rules and conventions surrounding a visit to a given oracular shrine. Literary evidence rarely tells us anything about the day-to-day administration of such sanctuaries; regulations of this sort are known to us only through the epigraphic record (inscriptions). From the oracle of Apollo Ptoios, an extra-urban sanctuary situated at the slopes of Mount Ptoos in Boiotia, for example, we have an undated inscription forbidding the unauthorized harvesting of holy laurel (Ducat 1971: 402, no. 252). A marble stele from the so-called Plutonium oracle of Acharaka (near Nysa) in the Greek east (today Turkey) carries an inscription from the early second century BCE laying down regulations by command of Antiochos III for the use of the sanctuary as a place of refuge (Welles 1934: 177–9, no. 43). Whilst it is not always possible to say what motivated such regulations, they provide invaluable insight into the kind of considerations that informed the everyday business of oracular sanctuaries.

The Plurality of Religious Experience

Oracular divination was just one kind of religious experience associated with oracular sanctuaries. Excavations have revealed evidence of a variety of other cultural practices at these shrines not directly involved in the provision of oracles. For example, there were altars for the performance of sacrifices and facilities for the subsequent familial or group meal. Some sanctuaries included temples and other structures housing statues of divinities not associated with the local practice of divination. Some of the larger sanctuaries also came to feature facilities for the celebration of games (running tracks, chariot racing), theaters and, in the Roman period, amphitheaters. Most notably, perhaps, as mentioned above, premier oracular shrines were favorite sites for the display of votive dedications in the form of statues and monumental structures (temples, treasuries). The presence of these structures, objects, and buildings in the physical space of oracular sanctuaries and the cultural practices they attest raise the question of the nature and "boundedness" of the religious experience afforded by a visit to these shrines.

Most general studies of individual oracular institutions have focused only on their roles as oracles. Again this is due to a perspective, overly reliant on the literary evidence, fixated

on ambiguous predictions and which ignores ordinary religious practice. But we may properly doubt whether such an account does justice to the plurality of experiences associated with the visit to an oracle. The distinction that is sometimes made between "sacred" and "secular" uses of these shrines (e.g., sacrifice vs. feasting), or "sacred" and "secular" structures associated with them (e.g., temples vs. running tracks), seems particularly unhelpful, because it draws an artificial line between different uses of a given sanctuary.

Some scholars have therefore argued for an integrated approach to the cultural practices evidenced at these shrines. Michael Scott in particular has made a convincing case for extending our discussion of the sanctuaries of Delphi and Olympia to include much more than just "oracles and games" (Scott 2010). To this end, he has developed a comprehensive approach towards sacred space, one that moves beyond the traditional piecemeal analysis of individual buildings, structures, or objects, and attempts to grasp the architectural site-scape and chronological development of complex oracular sanctuaries in their entirety.

For Delphi, Scott's study has illustrated the unfolding of a complex "spatial politics" manifested above all in the competitive investment in buildings and monumental dedications distributed over the physical topography of these shrines. Some time in the fourth century BCE, for example, the polis of Orneai in the Argolid dedicated a group of statues featuring a procession. In fact, it commemorated a much older victory, in the sixth century BCE, which had come to play a central role in their historical imagination. The archaizing features of the statues, as well as the site chosen for their display, reveals an attempt to backdate the dedication and thereby emphasize their historical achievements (Scott 2010: 139–40). A visit to Delphi always also entailed engaging with a multitude of such stories and their implicit claims to power and identity, stories successively presented in material guise to those making their way through the sanctuary.

However, it is not just the histories and identities of individual poleis that were represented here. A dynamic field of scholarly debate central to the study of Greco-Roman religion during the last thirty years has investigated the link between sanctuaries, including oracular shrines, and the formation and propagation of Greco-Roman identities more generally. This field of research was pioneered by François De Polignac (1995) for Greek sanctuaries in general (French orig. 1985). Catherine Morgan applied it to the study of oracular shrines (1989, 1990). Morgan observed that, in addition to their roles as relatively neutral spaces for symbolic investment and competitive display, oracles provided an authoritative means of conflict resolution within and between the emerging poleis. Potentially controversial and divisive questions were solved with the help of oracles, thereby establishing the role of these shrines as "panhellenic" sanctuaries.

Most recently, however, the concept of "panhellenism" has been subjected to scholarly scrutiny – both in itself and more specifically in its application to a certain group of sanctuaries in the ancient world (see Scott 2010: 250–73; Kindt 2012: 123–54). Traditionally, some of the larger inter-urban sanctuaries have been associated with the formation and propagation of an "all-Greek" (panhellenic) identity; this applies in particular to the Delphic oracle, which is frequently said to have drawn together clients from all over Greece and beyond. But the problem with panhellenism is that it is a modern, idealizing concept that does not do justice to the complex ways in which these sanctuaries were used to propagate divergent and sometimes even conflicting claims to power.

In particular, the middle-level analysis exemplified by Scott and others for Delphi has proven productive in revealing the roles of these shrines as complex and dynamic spaces for symbolic investment and competitive display (see Scott 2010: 41–145; Jacquemin 1999, in particular 245–97). This approach towards the study of sacred space links the discussion of individual objects and structures of a particular sanctuary (the "micro" level) to their positioning in the space of the sanctuary itself and its place within the wider landscape (the "macro" level).

I have stated above that it remains to be seen to what extent concepts and models derived for the study of Greek oracular divination can help to illuminate the Roman or Italian evidence. Middle level analysis may be a good case in point. Much good work has been done on reconstructing the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste from the rich archaeological evidence (see, e.g., the accounts by Kähler 1958 and Merz 2001). This was a substantial oracular sanctuary encompassing buildings on several levels connected by ramps and terraces built up a hill at the core of the ancient city of Praeneste (about 40 kilometers from Rome). Perhaps this evidence could now be evaluated along the lines exemplified for Greek sanctuaries in terms of what it reveals about the interplay between individual structures and their wider positioning within the space of the sanctuary and, indeed, the city of Praeneste?

At the same time, the imaginative focus on the individual moving through the physical space of sanctuaries has led to a diversification of perspectives. This interest in the phenomenology of sacred space has re-directed attention towards the way in which monuments, spaces, and landscapes interact with those visiting these shrines (see the pioneering study by Tillich 1994). For example, the experience of an individual visiting Delphi for the first time will have been shaped by the allusions to well-known mythological scenes depicted on temple friezes and through statues.

The heuristic device of studying monumental structures, dedications, iconographic representations on temples, etc., from the point of view of the individual onlooker (see, e.g., Osborne 1987) has proved very productive, and will surely generate further insights into the manifold ways in which these structures (for example, through varying sizes, colors, and other visual clues) sought to manipulate (and so define) the experience of visitors to premier oracular shrines.

Moving from the micro-level of individual structures and the way in which they were perceived to the macro-level, the holistic approach towards oracular shrines as sacred spaces has also produced insights into the siting of these sanctuaries within the wider natural landscape. Greco-Roman oracular shrines were frequently located where specific features of the natural environment promised direct divine contact: springs, caves, etc. Some of these features were incorporated into the mantic ritual of a particular shrine (see Friese 2010: 241–66). The distinction between "significant" and "insignificant", then – central to the observation of divine signs – also seems to be reflected in the choice of the location of oracular shrines.

Conclusion: The Real and the Imaginary Revisited

Material evidence contributes to our understanding of oracular shrines as places of religious experience by complementing and even challenging information derived from the literary evidence. Arguably the most significant aspect of oracular shrines that emerges

from a study of the material evidence concerns their role as sites at which the real merges almost seamlessly with the imaginary. This applies to the way temple iconography refers to (and sometimes re-writes) the tales of Greek mythology as reflected in the material evidence, for example, just as much as to the prophecies attributed to these shrines in the literary evidence. Classical scholars have traditionally dismissed the fantastic elements in the literary accounts of oracular prediction, (mis-) interpretation, and inevitable fulfillment. Granted that this blending of the real and the imaginary is also characteristic of the material evidence, however, perhaps we should see the fantastic in the tales as complementary to the natural situation, and acknowledge them both as central to the religious experience of oracular shrines (cf. Feldt 2012)? After all, oracular shrines are special places where the human and divine spheres intersected in a complicated negotiation of the known and the unknown, of human knowledge and ignorance, and of past, present and future.

Guide to Further Reading

On individual oracular sanctuaries see, e.g., Bonnechere (2003), Kähler (1958), Maass (1993), and Parke (1967). For the divinatory practice of necromancy (consultation of the dead) see Ogden (2001). Still the most comprehensive overview of Greco-Roman divination, including those divinatory rituals practiced at sanctuaries, is that by Bouché-Leclercq (1879–82). See also Burkert et al. (2005) for an accessible collection of sources and further literature on Greco-Roman divination. On Greco-Roman sanctuaries more generally see Marinatos and Hägg (1995) and Pedley (2005).

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CHAPTER 21

Buildings of Religious Communities

Inge Nielsen

Introduction

Membership in all religious groups requires specific rites. While all people are initiated in age groups through the course of their life, initiations related to changes of status or levels of expertise involve more intentionality on the part of the initiated. Such religious associations are primarily an urban phenomenon of the cosmopolitan Hellenistic and Roman periods, presenting the *floruit* of this kind of group in antiquity. They were private in the sense that they were independent of the city and the state, but they could in some cases be closely related to a sanctuary of their deity. They drew on some earlier traditions like the *Männerbünde* of the Archaic and Classical periods and other cultic or philosophical groups, including Orphic and Pythagorean groups in the Greek area and Italy, as well as priestly and other religious groups in Egypt and the Near East. The gods that were worshipped by religious associations were not often Olympian in character. Rather, these cult groups were associated with "personal" gods who maintained special relationships with individuals. In the Greek area and Italy, the main god of this kind was Dionysos, but other deities could be associated with such groups. This is also true of most foreign gods, such as the Egyptian Isis/Sarapis and the Anatolian Cybele/Attis as well as the Syrio-Phoenician gods and the Jewish god, which all reached the Greek area and Italy during the Hellenistic period, and Mithras and the Christian god, doing so in the early imperial period. The religious associations, which may or may not include both sexes, either took their names from the deity they worshipped or from the function they served in the cult, perhaps reflecting the origins of the group. For religious associations the celebration of a deity was the main function, in contrast to professional associations where cult was only a secondary activity, a differentiation not always made in scholarship. This does not mean, however, that the primarily religious associations could not serve other social and commercial purposes. This was, for practical reasons, often the

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case especially with associations belonging to foreign groups and worshipping deities from their homelands. This also means that many small religious groups never formally attained the status of collegia whose statutes are sometimes known from inscriptions. Many of these religious associations were mystery groups, whilst others were comprised of groups of lay priests or laymen. Often, an initiation like the ones known from mysteries was required to be a member of a religious group. It was particularly so when initiation granted specific roles in the cult where special knowledge was paramount. The priests themselves reached the highest level of knowledge, while the initiated often formed a kind of lay priesthood. The initiation was more than a collective experience, rather it created a religious and social network that required attendance in meetings, public festivals of the god in question (if existent), and other celebrations. Benefits of initiation varied from the promise of individual safety in this life and sometimes also in the afterlife, to achieving specific responsibilities (and status) for the celebration and maintenance of the cult (Burkert 1987; Nielsen 2014).

The questions to be answered in the following are related to how architecture can illuminate the functions of religious assemblies of various kinds in ancient society. The settings for such assemblies includes initiation- and mystery halls or meeting rooms for lay priests or other kinds of esoteric groups of worshippers who have organized in associations. They could meet in the public sanctuary or in a locality of their choosing that was either owned or rented by them, and which would have included a shrine. It is the halls outside the sanctuaries which are of special interest in this connection, as they were constructed exclusively to serve this function. Since the banquets constituted an essential part of the activities of the religious associations, special installations like *klinai*, as well as a hearth and perhaps also a kitchen, were required. These spatial and architectural contexts of assemblies have been mostly overlooked in the large corpus of recent scholarship that has studied the meaning of ancient religious and other voluntary associations

Figure 21.1 Remains of the Synagogue in Dura Europos with the torah-shrine visible. Photo by Rubina Raja.

almost exclusively with the help of written sources (Kloppenborg and Wilson 1996; Harland 2003; Gutsfeld and Koch 2006). Nonetheless, architecture may throw a new light on ancient religious associations, and necessarily on the social and religious institutions that created them (White 1997: vol. 2; Bollmann 1998; Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Schäfer 2002; *Hephaistos* 24; Nielsen 2014). A fundamental question is whether the architectural and functional settings for each of these groups are basically identical and/or reflect their possible origin, such as the initiation halls of the mystery cults, the temples, the banqueting rooms, and political assembly rooms (Nielsen 2006). Also, it is clearly worth considering that wealthy private residences were used for these purposes, particularly during the Roman period, but probably also in the Hellenistic period. The archaeological identification of such rooms is, however, difficult. The only indicators include the size of the room, installations (benches, *klinai* or kline-bands), a cult installation and perhaps the decoration (e.g., mosaics).

Rooms for Mystery Groups and Other Religious Associations of Dionysos

Although religious groups were associated with other local gods, in the Greek area and Asia Minor those belonging to the Dionysian cult were the most popular. They were characterized by private *thiasoi* whose members held their own meeting places and their own rituals whilst at the same time playing a part in the public cult (Merkelbach 1988; Jaccottet 2003). In Egypt, such private Dionysian groups led by charismatic leaders existed in parallel with the publicly-accepted ones led by priests; they were active from early Ptolemaic times. The private Dionysian *thiasoi* were often comprised of an elaborate hierarchy, consisting of priests and officials of various kinds, as well as common members. Their members belonged primarily to the upper class; they could be exclusively male or female, or they could be mixed. It is often difficult to judge whether these *thiasoi* were based on mysteries or whether they were rather more like social religious associations. As the status of these Dionysian *thiasoi* varied greatly, so did the rooms in which they met. The private *thiasoi* normally met in private residences which were probably owned by their leaders, but when a *thiasos* had reached a certain size, prestige, and wealth, it was naturally preferable to use its own building. At this stage at least, "professional" statutes were also considered necessary. The following terms for the entire setting used in the written sources are: *speira*, *hieron*, *naos*, *bakcheion*, *megaron*, *topos*. Of single elements one may mention *oikos*, *prothyron*, *hestiatoreion*, *kagkelloi*, *exedra*, *diate*, *stibas/stibadion*. One of the oldest known installations for a Dionysian *thiasos* has been identified in Piraeus. The association of the *dionysiastai* was already active in the early 2nd century BCE, and 15 *orgeones* (members), all of whom are Atheneian citizens, are recorded by name (Jaccottet 2003: Vol. 2, 1–3). The patron Dionysios was honored by two decrees, of which one mentions that he built and decorated a temple in his *domos*, and donated 1000 *drakmai* for monthly sacrifices and a luxurious *topos* for the monthly assemblies. This *domos* has been identified in a house of the Hellenistic period excavated near the harbor. The inscriptions were written on plinths and placed by a staircase leading to the eastern portico of a peristyle courtyard (Jaccottet 2003: Vol. 1). In Athens, the complex owned by the famous Iobacchoi group has been found on the eastern slope of

the Acropolis, where also a preserved inscription with their statutes dated shortly before CE 178 was set up, but the group was certainly older than that (*IG* 2.2.1368). It records the members of the *thiasos* who were from the best families in the city, and their functions in the association as *hiereus*, *antiereus*, *archibakchos*, *tamias*, *grammateus*, *prostates*, *proedros*, *enkosmos* and *hippos*. In addition to celebrating its own feasts (e.g., the yearly foundation feast) its members also participated in the public Dionysian festivals. The association hall was built on top of an earlier sanctuary of disputed identity (Schäfer 2002). In its present form, the hall dates to the second century CE, but an earlier hall was found below it dating to the first century BCE. In the inscription it was called *bakcheion*, *hestiatorion* and *stibas*, reflecting its main functions as religious place, assembly hall and a banqueting hall. The main columnar hall had a basilica-like form. In the apse facing the door stood two altars with Dionysian motives and a statue base indicating that it functioned as a cult-room.

In Pergamon, Dionysos assumed a central position as both dynastic and official god as well as having private associations dedicated to him. They are basically of two types: the peristyle house already known from the Hellenistic period and the Podiumsaal dominating in the Roman period. The best-known structure documents a development of the two types in Pergamon (Schwarzer 2008). It is located in the residential quarter and built in the second half of the second century BCE as a peristyle house with a central room that may have included a podium along the walls. A function as a meeting place for a Dionysian *thiasos* is, however, first ascertained from the early Augustan period when inscriptions on altars document that it was dedicated by the priest Herodes, *archiboulos* of the *bukoloi collegium*. One altar was dedicated to Dionysos Kathegemon, the other to Sebastos (Augustus), indicating that the emperor was worshipped there as well. The house kept this form until the first half of the second century CE, when a rebuilding resulted in the north wing being dominated by one large hall with wide podia entered from the long south side. The hall was enlarged in the next centuries and in the last phase of the fourth century CE had room for about 70 persons. Large quantities of animal bones were embedded in the floor, and niches in the podia could have been used as storage for the banqueting service. The cultic installations consisted of a niche facing the door and in front of it a late unfinished altar. The hall was used by both men and women, as is clear from both the finds and from inscriptions. The *bukoloi* were also active in the public cult, which was celebrated in the sanctuary of Dionysos and in his theatre in Pergamon (Schwarzer 2006).

In Italy, the Greek Dionysos did not hold any important role beyond the Greek colonies. The Dionysian *thiasoi* in this area were private in character and their members had no contact with the public sanctuaries. Aspects of the Dionysian cult were already known in the Classical period in the form of the Orphic movement, especially favored in Southern Italy, as is clear from the many finds of inscribed gold leafs in this area (Graf and Johnston 2007). This movement may well have inspired the introduction of the Dionysian mysteries and *thiasoi* in Italy, since private founders of Dionysian *thiasoi* were active from the early Hellenistic period in Etruria, Latium and Campania (Livy 39.13 and 15). Thus, these groups had flourished for quite some time before they became such a nuisance that the Roman Senate felt it had to intervene with a regular ban in 186 BCE, a course of events later known as the Bacchanalia Affair. Perhaps this conflict is reflected in the earliest preserved contexts for Dionysian *thiasoi* in Italy, namely the two much

Figure 21.2 The Baalshamin temple in Palmyra where a banqueting hall was found besides the temple. Photo by Rubina Raja.

discussed installations from Bolsena in Etruria (Pailler 1971).They were built between 220 and 200 BCE and destroyed by fire about 30–60 years later, around the time of the prohibition. The destruction by a violent event is demonstrated in their desecration and in the fact that private residences that were built in their place. One of these shrines, situated below the later Domus I, included an altar, a porticus and a subterranean "cistern" or cave, as well as a *naiskos* dedicated to Dionysos. The other sanctuary, situated below the later Domus II (the Casa dei Dipinti), consisted of a fairly large walled *temenos* with another subterranean plastered room that was later reused as a cistern in the *atrium* of the Domus. A smashed throne in terracotta, embellished with cupids and panthers, was found buried under the triclinium threshold. It is possible, although not proven, that these sanctuaries with their grotto-like rooms could have been used for Dionysian initiations and that their destruction was connected to the Bacchanalia Affair (see Van der Meer 2011: 120–7).

There have been various discussions as to the function of the famous room decorated with the so-called mystery fries in the Villa dei Mysteri just outside Pompeii. It is possible that this spacious room housed a private – probably female *thiasos* (Nilsson 1957). Such domestic *thiasoi* may be compared with the association of Agrippinilla known from a famous inscription from Torra Nova (*IGUR* 1.160). Dionysian *thiasoi* were active also in the western Roman provinces.

The Religious Communities of the Egyptian Gods

Religious groups for both men and women existed in Egypt from an early period. Especially during the Hellenistic period such groups played an important social role in Egyptian society, where their members were active both in the public cult as well as assembling privately to celebrate, for example, the so-called Sarapis-*kline* meals (Merkelbach 1995). When the Egyptian gods were introduced into the Greek area by

Egyptian merchants and itinerary priests, they were first worshipped in private, in buildings also used by the *koina* of these merchants. The best-known of these associations were named either after the gods worshipped: *isiastai*, *sarapiastai*, *osiastai*, *anubiastai*; after their cultic functions: *pasthophoroi*, *melanophoroi*, *hypostolistai*, *hieraphoroi*, *zakoroi*, or after the feasts of the public cult, in which they were active: *eneatistai*, *dekatistai* (Kleibl 2009). The earliest mention of a building (*hieron*) for such a group, dating before 333/32 BCE, comes from Piraeus (*IG* 2.2.337), where the cult was introduced by foreigners, who worshipped there in a *thiasos* together with local *metoikoi* and slaves. In Asia Minor and the islands along the coast, numerous *thiasoi* for these gods are documented from the Hellenistic period, but again no buildings have been preserved (Koester 1999). The earliest preserved complex for such associations is located in Eretria, in a residential quarter near the harbor (Bruneau 1975). This building underwent a characteristic development from a private sanctuary founded by Egyptians around 300 BCE to a public sanctuary in the late second century BCE. It was already abandoned in the middle of the first century BCE. Thus the sanctuary was originally connected with a private residence in the northern part, but in the second phase was made independent of it. Late in the first phase we hear of various associations (called *koina* or *synodes*) that were connected to the sanctuary, namely *melanophoroi* and *hypostolistai* as well as a *zakoros* (priest). This might indicate a developed cultic organizational structure approaching public or semi-public status, as might the growing number of non-Egyptian adepts.

On cosmopolitan Delos a cult of Sarapis was, according to the famous inscription found in Serapaion A and dating to about 200 BCE first introduced by an Egyptian priest from Memphis, Apollonios, who installed a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods in his house (*IG* 11.4). He had himself brought the cult statue of Sarapis to Delos under order from the god. Later, Sarapis instructed Apollonios' grandson Apollonios II to build for him a proper temple or chapel with the help of the community of *therapeutai*, whose members –according to the dedications at this time – were mainly Greeks, although Egyptian names do also occur. This preserved sanctuary is a rather small structure with a central court with a small temple and flanked by porticoes (Roussel 1916). The largest room was furnished with inscribed marble benches and had a podium in a recess. This room originally belonged to the house to the west which, as has been argued convincingly by White (1987), was probably the private residence where the cult was first introduced. The large room was then undoubtedly a dining- and assembly room with a shrine for the members of the cult. In the inscription mentioned above, this hall is called *melathron* (l. 15), a word that was also used for dining rooms (l. 62–5): "all the seats and the couches of the hall were consecrated with a divine summons to the banquet". Another sanctuary built around 200 BCE and related to a private house is Sarapeion B which housed *therapeutai*, *melanophoroi* and *sarapiastai*, according to inscriptions. All these groups undoubtedly took part in the ceremonies of the great public Serapeion C nearby as well as celebrating in their own sanctuary.

Also in Italy, the Egyptian gods were introduced via the private initiative of the *koina/collegia* system during the Hellenistic period. The founders were not necessarily Egyptians but might have been Italian merchants (*negotiatores*) who had become acquainted with the Egyptian gods for example on Delos where Italian names occur among the adepts already in the early second century BC. In Rome we know of both private cults and private associations related to these gods (Coarelli 1984). An Iseum on the Capitoline

Hill, known only from the written sources, was perhaps established by the said negotiators after the destruction of Delos in 88 BCE. The Collegium Pastophorum established in Rome by Sulla around 80 BCE must have been connected to this sanctuary as well, which from 58 BCE became subject to a series of repressive measures which led to its destruction under the Senate's orders near the middle of the first century BC (*CIL* 1.2.1263; Valerius Maximus 1.3.4). From the Imperial period we know of several private association buildings in Rome, but few have been preserved like the one near the S. Sabina church on the Aventine situated in a private complex dating to the first century CE. In the late second century CE the walls of the ante-room were covered with paintings with Egyptian scenes and graffiti in Latin, five of which record Isis and three *mystai* (*SIRIS* 390; Darsy 1968: 30–55). Outside of Rome these private *koina*-sanctuaries were normally consecrated to Serapis and located in great ports like Ostia and Puteoli. Their members were probably active in the important grain trade with Egypt; thus, the sanctuary of Serapis in Ostia was located in a commercial and residential quarter close to great *horrea* (Mar 2001). When built in 127 CE it constituted a complex with a sanctuary with temple and altar flanked by and connected with residential buildings furnished with large banqueting rooms. Another type of meeting place, constituting one large, often apsidal hall cum temple has been documented first probably in Praeneste in the second centura BCE (Krumme 1990), and later in several Roman imperial cities, such as Miletos, Pergamon and Argos, and might indicate a greater wealth of the community.

The Religious Communities of Cybele and Attis

In Anatolia, the homeland of these gods, religious groups were well known but their buildings have not been found. For example, the statutes of a group worshipping Agdistis (a deity closely associated with Cybele and Attis) are recorded in an inscription of the first century BCE from Philadelphia in Lydia (Dittenberger 1915–24: 3.985), recording the patron and the *oikos* where the association met, which included altars for ten saviour gods. Everyone, including slaves, could be granted membership if they obeyed certain purity rules. The association of priestesses called *thalassiai* for Meter in Kyzikos bathed the statue of the goddess during the spring festival (Boeckh et al. 1828–77: 3657). A stele with reliefs identified in Triglia in Bithynia, erected in honor of a priestess of Meter Cybele and Apollo, depicts the priestess offering on an altar to the two deities and, beneath it, a scene with ten members of the association gathered for a banquet and being entertained during the meal by musicians; the preparation of food is also visible (Pfuhl and Möbius 1977–79: Vol. 2).

In the Greek area, where Cybele (here called Meter Theon), had been worshipped from an early period, the members of her associations could be called *orgeones* and *thiasitai* and also *dendrophoroi*, *cannophoroi* and *thalassai* after their functions in feasts. In Piraeus, there is epigraphic evidence for celebrations in a private context of such groups already from the fourth century BCE (Garland 1987). Of the nine preserved decrees five belonged to *orgeonai* (consisting probably of Athenian citizens), one to *thiasitai* (whose members were *metoikoi*), and one with mixed membership of *orgeonai* and *thiasitai*. They were led by an annual priestess and a *zakoros*, an assistant priestess, who also organized

the Attideia feast; the former priestesses formed a kind of council. A procession of vessel-carriers (called *phialephoroi*) is recorded as well as ladies-in-waiting of the goddess who collected money for her. We learn of only one priest and no *galli*. As is the norm in such associations the male members primarily carried the non-religious responsibilities as *epimeletes*, *tamias*, *grammateus*; they also offered gifts to the sanctuary and made donations towards funerals for the poor. These associations probably served in the feasts of the public cult, which were celebrated in the official Metroon in Piraeus. Some groups met in their own rooms, often in private houses that may have been called *orgiasteria*, a term known from Nicander (*Alexipharmaca* 6–8). In Rhamnous in Attica, the "North-western House" had an altar in the courtyard with dedications from a priest to Meter Theon, Sarapis and Isis, dating to 220 BCE (Dittenberger 1915–24: 40.199), as well as a square sacred building (Xagorari-Gleißner 2008, 112–14). The house included living rooms, the largest of which had benches, workshops and shrines. In Pella in Macedonia, a building with a peristyle court excavated north of the Agora and dating to the last quarter of the fourth century BCE was furnished with an altar dedicated to Meter Theon and a temple (Xagorari-Gleißner 2008: 119–20). Workshops and living quarters with dining rooms were identified in the northern part of the building. It was clearly owned by a private association for Meter Theon.

In Italy, cultic associations (or *collegia*) with members including men and women worshipping Cybele, here called Magna Mater and Attis, are documented as well. The most well-known were called *dendrophori* and *cannophori* and their leader was sometimes called *pater* (or *mater*) – a typical title in groups of *mystae*. Such groups are documented epigraphically in the great commercial centers of Rome, Ostia and Puteoli and rooms for their use were found in their sanctuary in Ostia; but they could also meet in private buildings. This is, for example, the case in Rome, where an inscription from the late second century CE records that a *schola* for the *dendrophori* of Magna Mater called Basilica Hilariana formed part of a private house on the Caelius (*CIL* 4.30973). This partly-excavated structure was located in a former living quarter (Pavolini 1990: 171–6). Such groups were also active in the Roman provinces, not least in Gallia, where Cybele had a high status. Thus a meeting hall for a religious association for Cybele has been identified in a private house in Glanum (Gros 1997:), the so-called Maison d´Attis, which was first built in the early first century BCE. In the late first century CE the southern end of the peristyle court was rebuilt to form a hall with built-up benches along the walls. These changes were related to the consecration of this part of the insula to Cybele/Bona Dea as documented by an altar and other finds.

The Religious Communities of the Phoenician and Syrian Gods

In the homeland of these gods we learn of Semitic male *marzeah* groups operating from as early as the late Bronze Age that continued to flourish in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Teixidor 1981). The ritual communal meal was the central performance of these associations. In contrast with the religious associations of other gods, the *marzeah* groups were invariably regarded as founded by the divinities themselves. They are documented in

inscriptions, and numerous assembly- and banqueting rooms associated with these groups have been identified. They could meet in public sanctuaries, for example in the banqueting halls in the *temene* of Bel and Baal Shamin in Palmyra, as well as in their own buildings. At Dura-Europos, a caravan town by the Euphrates River with many foreign merchants, there is much epigraphic and archaeological material that documents such groups. Especially interesting are the private sanctuaries belonging to foreign groups who, apart from the main religious function, also used these buildings for professional purposes. This is, for example, true of the sanctuary of the Gadde (one of them Palmyrene), where graffiti on the walls of a room behind the so-called "salle à gradins" record two groups of four men, and food stuffs like cakes for cultic meals (Rostovtzeff, Brown, and Wells 1939: 218–83). An inscription from the sanctuary of the foreign god Aphlad records a group of eleven male members who built an *andron* or dining room which has been identified (Rostovtzeff 1934: 98–130). These members came from six different Semitic families. Also in the Nabataean region numerous banqueting rooms have been identified both inside and outside the sanctuaries (Nehmé 1997). A great number of isolated banqueting rooms owned by private *thiasoi* found in and around Petra were furnished with *triclinia*, niches at the back wall and water installations. Their religious function is not in doubt, as documented by several inscriptions.

When the Phoenicio-Syrian gods moved west they were primarily worshipped by slaves and merchants from home. Their sanctuaries were accordingly placed in the (harbor) cities. In Piraeus, (the Phoenician) Aphrodite´s *thiasitai* are known already from the late fourth century BCE (*IG* 2.2.1261). In the free harbor of Delos, merchants from these cities not only met in the large public sanctuary with many banqueting rooms, but also established private assembly buildings with inscribed altars, such as those found on the slope of Mt. Cynthos from around 100 BCE (Plassart 1928). With their courts/halls and surrounding podia they were very well suited for communal banquets. The more successful associations based themselves in the town of Delos. This was the case with the *koinon* of the *poseidoniastes* (Poseidon = Baal) from Berytos. Their luxurious building in the Skardana quarter included at least two great rooms for assemblies and perhaps three for banquets, in addition to a courtyard and a Phoenician style sanctuary (Trümper 2006: 115–22). In Italy, the settings for such groups are, except for a possible sanctuary in Rome on the Janiculum hill, exclusively known from written sources. In Puteoli, an association of merchants from Tyros was established in 79 CE. This association was set up in rented quarters (*katoikountes*) and the members all originated from the homeland. In 174 CE, meetings continued to be held in rented rooms. An inscription (Dittenberger 1903–5: no. 595) informs that the members were forced to ask their home town for money to pay the annual rent because they had spent all their means to celebrate the anniversary of the emperor, probably with a banquet, to show their loyalty and to gain acceptance. Tyros answered this pledge by asking a group of Tyrian merchants in Rome to assist those in Puteoli.

Mithraic Communities

There has been some discussion on whether the Mithras cult with Persian roots was a mystery cult or should rather be compared with religious associations (Clauss 1990, 1992). Because the meetings of these groups were always associated with mysteries in

the ancient sources this function should not be doubted; but as shown this does not exclude the *mystai* from acting as religious associations. When the Mithraic cult was transmitted to the West during the second half of the first century CE it was primarily associated with cities, especially well known from Ostia and Rome, and military camps, mostly known from the northern Roman provinces. The mithraic groups did their best to create a cave-like atmosphere, whether the mithraeum was built into a private house, into a public building (often in cellars), or into the ground like in the military camps. The importance of the communal meal is indicated by the architectural arrangement of the mithraea which, in addition to the cult image and an altar at the end, were dominated by broad *kline*-like podia along the walls, niches for banqueting services, and finds of bones from meals that occurred in these rooms. Such podia along the long walls have been identified in almost every mithraeum. In the Christian sources we learn of a meal of bread and wine or water that was considered to be a parody of the Eucharist.

Jewish Religious Communities

Because banquets formed an integral part of life of both Semitic (*marzeah*) and Jewish communities they probably had the same roots. Only special Jewish religious communities like the Essenes in Palestine, the *therapeutai* near Alexandria, and the Diaspora communities share a likeness with religious associations, since assemblies and communal meals also held a crucial role here (Klinghardt 1996: 183–216). In Palestine, the Essenes are documented by Josephus, Philo and Pliny the Elder. According to Josephus (*The Jewish War* 2.129), this all-male "sect" was widespread primarily in the cities while Philo (*Every Good Man is Free* 85) records that the Essenes lived mostly in villages. In both cases they met and ate together in private houses, according to Josephus, and Philo observes that "… no one's house is his own in the sense that it is not shared by all … for besides the fact that they dwell in communities the door is open to visitors from elsewhere who share their convictions." According to him the Essenes referred to their meeting place as a synagogue. They could have also been organized as independent colonies, however. One such colony might be identified with the Khirbet Qumran complex, if the inhabitants were indeed Essenes, which is not certain. Another related esoteric group of both sexes called the *therapeuthai* and active in Egypt is described by Philo (*On the Contemplative Life*), who called its members "contemplative Essenes". They were widely dispersed and the most prominent of them lived in a colony near Alexandria. They lived in separate huts and assembled only in the communal building for the Sabbath and for feasts. Here, both men and women were placed in such a way that they could hear but not see one another, and each group was placed hierarchically during the prayers and the readings of the script. They sat in rows on wooden benches or reclined on them at communal meals. Philo likened the participants to *bacchoi/ai* or *korybantes*, i.e., initiates into the Dionysian mysteries.

The Diaspora synagogues had the same function as other foreign religious groups which established themselves in the Greek area and in Italy, and we also see a parallel development from private houses to independent buildings (White 1997: vol. 1; Nielsen 2005). The earliest Diaspora was the Egyptian one, but unfortunately none of the many epigraphically known synagogues (here called *proseuchai,* prayer houses) in Egypt has

been preserved. The earliest known Diaspora synagogue is to be found on cosmopolitan Delos, where we know of Jewish communities from the early second century BCE. This building, placed near the sea and on the outskirts of the town, had a long development. In the first phase, a great hall dominated, in which Trümper (2004) has calculated that there was room for twenty to twenty-two *klinai* to accommodate forty to forty-four diners. In the second phase, when this room was divided in two, both furnished with benches, a throne and a niche were added to the main room. This niche was probably for the Torah scrolls, since eventually Torah shrines became an integral part of the Diaspora synagogues. A good example of this is the famous painted synagogue in Dura-Europos, which was first housed in the main room of a private house. Later, in the first half of the third century CE, the house was enlarged to house around 140 members (Kraeling 1956). Some synagogues were furnished with a separate dining room in addition to the assembly room, as seen in the synagogue of Stobi where a *triclinium* is recorded, and at the synagogue of Ostia where a separate banqueting room has been identified (White 1997: Vol. 2, 72–3, 1987).

Early Christian Communities

For many years it has been debated whether Christianity should be considered a mystery religion and therefore comparable with other mystery cults, also as regards the places where Christians congregated. While no one can really deny that Christian baptism is an initiation rite, it is more sensible to discuss the church services as cultic and performed by a religious group (Ascough 2006). The primary function of the earliest "church" buildings as recorded in the Gospels of Paul is the assembly of the community, the celebration of the Eucharist, the communal meal or *agape*, and as starting point for missionary activities. Christianity was an urban religion and for this reason the places where the first Christians met were normally town houses (White 1997: Vol. 1; Klinghardt 1996). A single room was set aside for the congregation, but was not specially designed for this use. This setting limited the size of the congregation. An average room could accommodate about ten to twenty people, while a great hall or a courtyard thirty to forty people.

Contrary to expectations considering the bright future of Christianity, very little is known of its places of congregation before the era of Constantine. Only one church building has in fact been identified with absolute certainty, namely in Dura-Europos (Kraeling 1967), near the synagogue. It was built into an earlier private courtyard house in the 230s CE and the structure was destroyed with the sack of the city in 256 CE. The changes were basically constituted by the creation of a large hall and a baptisterium, which was furnished with a bathing basin and with Christian wall-paintings. In the large cities the Christians at times had the resources to construct a new, independent building, and this happened with increasing frequency during the third century CE (White 1997: Vol. 2, passim). Thus when the systematic persecutions began in the middle of the third century the churches had become so visible that they were easy to locate. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 8.1.5) records that new churches were built instead of the old prayer houses (*proseuchai*) in every city; and Porphyry (*Against the Christians* fr. 76) scorned this hectic building activity around 270 CE. The economic means for this

building boom were provided by the increasing commercial activities of the Christians and the Church owned large, often inherited, fortunes and estates. The preserved churches of this period are so few that any typology needs to be based on the abundant written sources, which itself poses many risks. Rather, it is sensible to adopt a regionally-specific approach as both the function and the setting of relevant structures vary from place to place prior to the emergence of a kind of orthodoxy in the period following the reign of Constantine.

Conclusions

The contexts for initiations, assemblies and sacred banquets for religious communities varied greatly and were dependent on numerous variables including cult, type of association, economy, chronology and region. There were specific similarities in all cults, namely a hall of some kind with seats and/or podia for dining and a chapel or the like for the god in question. The structures owned by such associations often first belonged to private houses, which were only little changed, since the dining room could be used for meetings also, and an altar and shrine could easily be added. In many cases, the groups succeeded eventually in building their own meeting places, and this development may also have been reflected in a growing formal status and the creation of statutes, like the ones known from professional associations. Especially in the Roman period we have examples of roomy directional halls for this purpose, with niches, apses and the like. While some of these groups had an exclusively religious function, others, especially those belonging to foreign cults, could serve commercial uses as well.

Guide to Further Reading

In my book *Housing the Chosen* (2014) all relevant research literature may be found; especially important for the archaeological material are: White (1997), Bollmann (1998), Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Schäfer (2002), and Schwarzer (2008).

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CHAPTER 22

Sanctuaries and Urban Spatial Settings in Roman Imperial Ostia

Marlis Arnhold

Introduction

Although the sanctuaries in Ostia received much attention in the scholarship of the past decades, many questions about their role in urban life remain unanswered. The problem appears not only as one of differing perspectives and definition of the central terms, but also as one of the selection of the material and the interpretations made in consequence. The available studies concentrate on sanctuaries that were either labeled as "public" or "private" or which have their cult identity (e.g., Mithras), specific architectural features and/or their association with collective agents such as *collegiae* in common. Nevertheless, each of these studies deserves credit as a valuable contribution in its time which allowed for a better understanding of religion in the harbor town. Particularly the more recent approaches of Anna-Katharina Rieger, Dirk Steuernagel, and Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser overcame the differentiation based on cult identities which dominated the works on sanctuaries until then (Rieger 2004; Steuernagel 2004; Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000). This chapter seeks to go a step further, as the differentiation between public and private cults shall be put aside and a way to the integration of so-called small sanctuaries into the religious landscape of the Roman Imperial city be suggested. The question deriving from this re-evaluation is not simply one of differing roles of single cult-sites within urban life, but rather ought to be how urban space was shared and acquired both in and through sanctuaries and how it eventually was conceptualized in consequence.

The Public of an Audience and as Legal Status

Many studies based their selection of sites for investigation on the identification as *sacra publica* and *sacra privata*. Both terms often lack precise definitions and, even when understood correctly, they are not suitable for all contexts. Thus, the differentiation in *sacra publica*

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and *sacra privata* does not give any information about the accessibility of a sanctuary, the status of the cult-adherents, or the function of the cult. The allocation to the one or the other category implies first and foremost regulations of finances and duties, which either are affairs of the political and administrative institutions – the "public" – or matters for individuals outside of these – the "private" (Rüpke 2001: 27–31). The closer look, however, reveals that realities tend to differ as the political and administrative institutions were dominated by the members of the élite. Their communication reflected the interests and concerns of their own social sphere, but not those of the entire collective (30–5; see also Bowes 2008: 21–4). All the same, could *sacra privata* be of public interest, as Rüpke points out, when their maintenance was threatened or required control (Rüpke 2001: 33–7).

Applying these terms to the archaeological evidence therefore allows certain insights but leaves open a range of questions. They shed light on the role of monumental podium temples, for instance, for representation – that is: one form of communication – of the individual members of an urban élite, but they do not address shifting functions or the presence of other and further participants, which may have occurred over time. Studies with such a narrow focus do not lack legitimacy, of course, but the reader needs to be conscious of their partial view.

Analyzing the function of cult-sites within a broader spatial context demands an alternative definition of public, which draws attention not on the legal status and its implications but on the activities taking place in the sanctuaries. In relation to these, public is always situational as it is constituted out of those more-or-less actively engaged in the actions as well as of those who catch a glimpse of what is going on as they happen to live nearby or pass the sanctuary on their way. Making actions visible for by-passers on the street, for instance in form of processions outside the sanctuaries, should be regarded as a central option to acquire space outside the sanctuary for a set period of time and in order to *create* a certain public temporarily. Moving out on the streets may have gained more importance for cult practice during the second and third centuries CE, when the view on formerly well visible cult buildings was blocked due to the increasing density of urban space. However, further studies are necessary to verify this hypothesis.

In any case, asking for the "public" of the activities situated within sanctuaries brings to light the essential aspects of the investigation: Next to the architectural forms of the various cult buildings, the size and types of available spaces, their accessibility and the possibility of visual accesses to them from the outside are crucial aspects for the analysis. All the same, the understanding of the term "public" outlined above implies a specific comprehension of urban space, which is perceived as a composition of a multitude of "publics" of differing extend and temporal range. These may exist contemporaneously next to each other, overlap in a spatial and temporal sense (which bears a potential for conflict), or be situated at the same place but at different times. Before more light can be shed on these aspects, however, a decisive characteristic of Roman Imperial sanctuaries requires a word.

Blurred Boundaries

How far did the appearance and function of sanctuaries in Imperial times differ from those of Republican or occasionally even of Augustan date? To answer this question, the transformations of the Area Sacra dei Templi Repubblicani in Ostia shall be briefly

referred to as an exemplary case. This precinct deserves particular attention as it reveals many alterations during the Imperial period which affected its spatial organization as well as the visibility of the temple buildings to a degree that scholars occasionally have regarded the eastern half of the *area sacra* as a separate entity which did not belong to the sanctuary. The case thus illustrates how important it is to consider the building history and chronology of the sites for investigations in order to avoid misconceptions of this kind.

By the end of the Late Roman Republic, the Area Sacra dei Templi Repubblicani, situated immediately to the west of the Republican castrum, comprised three prostyle podium temples (Figure 22.1). They had all been erected in the western half of a trapezoidal area surrounded by streets and faced in two cases the castrum. The third temple, the Tempio Tetrastilo, was oriented towards the street running along the south side. In later phases, the main entrance of the precinct opposed this temple building directly and we may assume that this was already the case around 100 BCE when the Tempio Tetrastilo was built.

Whereas the podium temples presented the only larger architectures of the Late Republican *area sacra*, several other buildings were added from the late first century BCE onwards. Among the first of these were buildings erected in the central part of the trapezoidal area where they bordered what appeared to be the shared forecourt of two of the podium temples, the Tempio Tetrastilo and the Temple of Hercules (Mar 1990: 147–8). Further edifices were added in the trapezoidal area and particularly its eastern half until the latter was entirely covered with buildings by the mid-second century CE

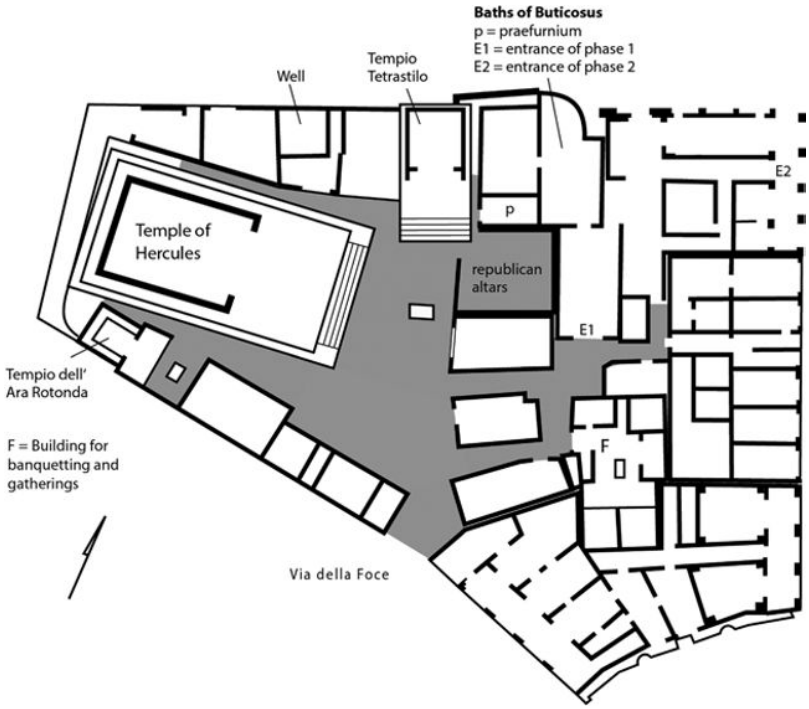

Figure 22.1 Plan of the Area Sacra dei Templi Repubblicani in Ostia. After Arnhold (forthcoming).

(152–3). Of these architectures, those of the first century BCE and first century CE allow – according to the number and arrangement of their rooms, the position and width of their entrances, and other preserved elements of their interior design and equipment – interpretations as store-rooms, and in the case of building F as an edifice for gatherings and banquets (147–8; 153 with n. 45; Arnhold forthcoming). The architectures of the second century CE, however, differed from these in function, as they comprise a Trajanic bath complex as well as *insula*-architectures from the Trajanic and Antonine periods (Steuernagel 2004: 88–9).

Despite these functions, the following arguments account for their affiliation with the precinct: Although the bath complex flanks the Tempio Tetrastilo to the east and covers large parts of the northeastern section of the trapezoidal area, its well house had been built to the west of the same podium temple, adjacent to the north side of the Temple of Hercules. A pipe connected the well house and the baths and, running along the back side of the Tempio Tetrastilo, was furnished with two branches leading into the cella of the podium temple, where they supplied two fountains flanking the cult image with water (Mar 1996: 128–30). Furthermore, in Trajanic times, the bath complex was only accessible from a section within the trapezoidal area of the *area sacra*, which in turn first had to be entered via its main entry at the south side. This situation was changed during the Antonine period, when the baths were enlarged and their entrance moved to the street running along the east side of the *area sacra*. There, it was incorporated into the *insula*-architectures and opened in between the shops and staircases leading to the upper stories of the *insulae* (127–33). The latter also presented a second connection to the other buildings of the *area sacra*, since edifice I xiv 9 could be accessed from the street outside the precinct by means of a corridor which led to the west side of the building where a door gave way to the passages between the other buildings of the *area sacra* and particularly the section from which the bath complex once could be entered during its earlier phase (135). Despite their non-cultic functions these buildings present direct connections to the other architectures of the *area sacra*. In case of the Trajanic bath complex it can even be added that their operation involved movement in the same area of the precinct that was also used for sacrifices: The *praefurnium* of the baths, the room with the installations for heating the water, was situated immediately to the east of the pronaos of the Tempio Tetrastilo. To access it or supply the *praefurnium* with firewood, the forecourt of the podium temple had to be crossed (131–2).

The case of the Templi Repubblicani in Ostia thus illustrates that a sanctuary in Roman Imperial times could host a multitude of very different activities which were not necessarily of cultic nature. Moreover, it reveals to what extent new architectures for very different purposes could be erected and the boundaries of what could be perceived as part of the sanctuary be blurred. The modern observer cannot help but wonder if the contemporary of the later second century CE was actually aware of the fact that he visited a bath building connected to temples and relaxed in water deriving from a precinct. Without a reference to the cults through the original name of the baths or a street sign – no evidence for either of these has been preserved – the knowledge of this fact was limited to those acquainted with the particulars of this place. A stranger simply took a bath, visited a shop in one of the *insulae* or went into the precinct for a prayer and a look at the dedications without being conscious of – and perhaps also even without caring – for the affiliation of the buildings.

Although the Templi Repubblicani stand apart from the known sanctuaries to a certain extent due to the state of preservation and the degree of investigation of their architectures, similar situations can be found in other cult-sites. The Area Sacra di Largo Argentina in Rome, for instance, likewise shows an intense building activity during the Imperial period when the spaces between and behind the four podium temples were subsequently filled with architectures. These comprise an edifice for banquets as well as architectures for multiple purposes, such as for storage and living (Arnhold forthcoming).

In other cases, e.g., the Temples of Castor and Pollux on the Forum Romanum, two of the three podium temples in the Forum Holitorium, and the Temples of Mater Matuta and Fortuna in Rome, rows of *tabernae* were installed into the podia. Not only were these small rooms used as shops – in the case of the Temple of Castor and Pollux a hairstylist is known (Nilson, Persson and Sande 2009: 53–9), whereas in one of the *tabernae* of the Temple of Mater Matuta and Fortuna paint was sold (Colini, Virgili, and Capasso 1978: 431–3) – but can their installation in all three cases be associated with reconstruction works of the temple buildings? The thought comes that the installation of these *tabernae*, which could be let out, presented a way to acquire money for the building activities (Arnhold forthcoming). Also in regard of these shops, the in- and outsides of the sanctuaries became blurred: whereas the hairstylist of the Castor and Pollux Temple technically offered his services on the temple grounds, his customers may not have envisaged his shop as part of the sanctuary.

Money matters may likely also have played a role in the building activities at the Area Sacra dei Templi Repubblicani in Ostia. The relocation of the entrance of the Trajanic bath complex to the street outside the sanctuary allows one to conclude that the baths were not intended for the sole use of the cult personal, a specific association affiliated with the cults, or the immediate worshippers in general. Rather had it been aimed at a wider public. This may have had two reasons: either the baths served for representation purposes for which a large audience was desirable, or the complex was regarded as a welcome device to acquire money through entrance fees which in turn could be used to finance other activities and building projects including the maintenance of existing architectures within the precinct. This hypothesis is supported by the pattern of the building activities which likewise becomes apparent for the Area Sacra di Largo Argentina. The individual building projects have been realized one by one, starting with smaller architectures amongst which we find the first buildings most likely used for storage and other similar functions as well as the banqueting-edifice. The later projects, on the other hand, are characterized by their larger scale and the remodeling, often enlarging, of existing architectures, as can be said for the Trajanic baths and the banqueting-edifice of the Ostian example. We may deduce from this observation that the building activities have not been initiated by various individuals acting on their own behalf as was the case with the triumphal dedications of temples in Republican times, but by a collective, for instance an association or *collegium*, that was affiliated with the cult-site in question. This does not exclude, of course, the possibility that this collective agent could have changed over time (Arnhold forthcoming).

These examples allow only partial insight into the way sanctuaries functioned during the Roman Imperial period. Next to the cult-sites with increasingly less visible boundaries and affiliations with non-cultic activities, a large number of sanctuaries existed, which maintained the same perfectly obvious and visible in- and outsides throughout the

centuries. Building activities, in these cases, were mostly limited to the actual temple building and its framing architectures, even though they could be of enormous extent. It is striking that many of these latter sanctuaries can be associated with political and administrative institutions, be it either the emperors, the senate, an archive or some other institutionalized body. If not only erected during the Imperial period, these sanctuaries often had already in Late Republican times been equipped with surrounding porticos and other framing architectures which set them spatially apart from the urban environs and were, hence, particularly attractive for political representation. In this sense, the religious cityscape of the Imperial period does not present an hierarchy but a multitude of very different functions and appearances of cult-sites.

But then, despite the affiliation of some cult-sites with non-cultic activities during the Imperial period, it is not possible to speak of a profanization of sanctuaries or decreasing religiosity. Both the erection of new temple buildings, for instance by *collegiae*, and the installation of numerous cult-rooms in houses, workshops, and other buildings forbid any interpretation of this kind. What changes during the Imperial period are the architectural forms, the building contexts in which they appear, the cults and agents associated with them, as well as the visibility, accessibility, and function of these cult-sites. Again, *sacra publica* can hardly be distinguished from *sacra privata* when it comes to these alterations.

Shared Spaces

The case of the Tempio Tetrastilo and the use of its forecourt both for the sacrifices at the altar as well as the supply of the *praefurnium* and the operation of the baths illustrate that the spatial situations could require functional and temporal organization when buildings had been erected in extreme proximity to each other. After all, every single activity in these buildings had its own specific public as the agents involved could differ. In view of the density of Roman Imperial urban spaces, one might expect to find many examples for similar functional overlaps. However, the evidence reveals that, here, a differentiation concerning varying urban contexts is necessary.

Street sites, for instance, suggest very dense spatial situations in which sacrifices and rituals competed for space with the everyday traffic. In these cases, the altars of the podium temples were often placed into the front stairs of the temple buildings, as can be seen on the Forum Romanum and the Forum Holitorium in Rome. The analysis of the Ostian evidence, however, puts the impression of a wide-spread phenomenon somewhat into perspective. Only two podium temples, the Tempietto Repubblicano and the Tempio dei Mensores, reveal such a proximity to the streets in front of them that spatial regulations would have been an issue. Conversely, several sanctuaries can be found throughout the harbor city situated along the major streets, which were set apart from the traffic by porticoed forecourts and often revealed narrowed entrance situations. Among these we can count the Serapeo III xvii 3, the Tempio Collegiale V xi 1, the Tempio Rotondo, the Quattro Tempietti and the Tempio dei Fabri Navales. It appears that even though visibility from the arterial roads was desired, the wish to deliminate spaces and, at least occasionally also the possibility to close these up, predominated. Regarding the sanctuaries with podium temples facing the streets, sharing spaces was

rather avoided than sought for. This, however, generally does not hold true for minor-sized sanctuaries, such as the compital shrines, even though only few examples of these are known from Ostia (see Bakker 1994: 118–33; Anniboletti 2011: 69).

Then, many workshops and commercial buildings or *horrea* present separate rooms reserved for the purpose of venerating cults. But we also find small shrines set against walls and niches with this function. The Caseggiatio del Larario (I ix 3), a commercial building, presented a polychrome niche which came into view upon entering the courtyard that formed the center of the building (Figure 22.2). Both customers and people working at the shops opening onto the courtyard passed this niche when pursuing their business. However, people may have also gathered in front of it for a joint morning prayer.

Similarly, the courtyard of the fullery II xi 1, which incorporated a small shrine in one of its corners, may have served different purposes. It could be used as a place to dry the freshly-dyed and washed cloths, might have provided space for short-time storage of goods related to the fullery, but also hosted cultic actions related to the shrine. The findings do not reveal how often these cultic actions were performed or if amounted only to rather quick prayers uttered by a few individuals, if any at all.

But the evidence from other settings teaches the modern observer to be cautious with hasty interpretations concerning the identity of the cult attendants. The presence of a

Figure 22.2 The polychrome niche of the Caseggiatio del Larario (I ix 3) as seen from the entrance of the building. Photo by Marlis Arnhold.

sebaciarius among the cult adherents of the Sacello di Silvano in the Caseggiato dei Molini in Ostia (*CIL* 14.4530; Bakker 1994: 159–61) or the one of a *margaritarius* in the *collegium dendrophorum* in Rome (*CIL* 6.30973b) attest that cults affiliated with apparently closed-up social settings may not have been limited to these at all. Despite its use for various purposes, the courtyard of the fullery provided sufficient space for joint worship to an extent that the rituals performed here could have exceeded what has been paraphrased above as "quick prayers of a few" and may also have involved the one or other neighbor or friend.

In the case of the commercial settings and workshops, shared spaces – both in the sense of varying functions as well as the involvement of "outsiders" – appear as a relatively frequent phenomenon. Sharing spaces, here, was not avoided at all. The reason for this may above all lie in the fact that varying interests clash less when the agents involved in the different actions were partially identical. The choice for a spatially separated cult-room or building within a workshop or commercial building presents in these contexts most certainly a decision for specific forms of cult practice, such as common meals, and may likewise have been based on the availability of financial resources and space in general. The latter aspects certainly have often also influenced the decisions regarding sanctuaries along the streets, which shows how difficult any attempt of a categorization of the cult-sites in fact is, and why the discussion of various aspects, such as the location, visibility, and accessibility of cult-sites, in this chapter should not be mistaken as such an attempt.

In architectures established for the production and trade of goods (or services), visible niches and shrines did not only inform the visitor of the veneration of a cult, but also evoked specific atmospheres and even functioned in a manner similar to shop signs. Thus, the location of a cult-site directly opposite of the main entrance of a busy commercial building – or, vice versa, in an allegedly quiet area at the back of a house – does not allow any statement about its supposed importance. Asking for it would also be the wrong question. A cult-site opposing an entrance was rather always intended to catch the entering visitor's eye and could very well present a hallmark of the building, if we consider for instance the polychromy and design of the niche in the Cassegiato del Larario I ix 3. This illustrates likewise that one and the same cult-site addressed different audiences.

In the case of the Tempio Tetrastilo and the adjoining bath complex, the affiliation of the buildings even created a specific ambience, apparent to those who were familiar with the place. However, the link between the cults venerated in the precinct and the baths should not be misunderstood in the sense of a healing cult (Scheid 1991: 209–14). The location of the well within the *area sacra* most certainly enhanced the act of bathing as it promised a specific quality of the water. Yet, not so much the cleanliness of the body for performing sacrifices was promoted here, but rather a certain experience of one's own body was dwelt upon (contra: 209–14). This accounts similarly (but to varying degrees depending on the particular settings) also for other cases, in which cult-sites and bath complexes were affiliated.

Sharing certain spaces was therefore not only occasionally necessary or eventually accepted when alternative options were lacking, but has even been fostered when the affiliation of cults and other activities seemed attractive for the one or other, or for both at best.

Limiting Visibility, Restricting Accessibility

Closing the doors to a wider public and performing rituals only visible for the immediate participants has often been perceived as a characteristic of cult-groups and of specific cults, such as the one of Mithras or Bona Dea. Studies of the past years, however, illustrated that, even for such cults, the idea of entirely concealed worship proves at least partially wrong, if one thinks for instance at Marleen Martens' investigations in Tienen, Belgium, or Kim Bowes' observations on public and private worship (Martens 2009; Bowes 2008).

Architectural settings revealing limited visibilities and implying access restrictions can be found throughout Roman Imperial Ostia. The Campo della Magna Mater presents a striking example as several parts of its *area sacra* were set apart over time to create spaces for the veneration of further deities, such as Attis and Bellona. But the Tempio dell'Ara Rotonda, the smallest of the three podium temples of the Area Sacra dei Templi Repubblicani, illustrates the case.

When the level of the street passing to its south was raised by 1.5 meters in Flavian times, the podium and part of the superstructures of the edifice disappeared from the view of the passer-by on the street (Figure 22.3). A wall stretching along the latter next to the tiny forecourt of the podium temple further on blocked the view on the building's front and the altar. Actions taking place here could only be seen from the forecourt itself which, given its small size, allowed for very few persons to be present at any one time. All that the passer-by on the street could see was the cornice along the south and back sides of the edifice. This, however, was visible to him at eye-level. What renders the way the podium temple functioned on a medial level is the fact that the superstructures of the entire building had been entirely renewed and revetted with marble when the level of the street next to it was raised. Even though no doors could be closed in this case, the example

Figure 22.3 The Tempio dell'Ara Rotonda of the Area Sacra dei Templi Repubblicani. In the foreground: pavement of the street from Flavian times. Photo by Marlis Arnhold.

thus illustrates how the transformations of various urban structures affected each other and resulted in an altered visibility of the architectures and equipment of cult-sites. In the case of the Tempio dell'Ara Rotonda, the Flavian works fostered the exclusive ambience of the cult that did not exist to this degree in the earlier building phases although space in front of the podium temple had also been limited before.

Also in view of the installation of the large number of cult-rooms, e.g., for the cult of Mithras, in various forms of pre-existing architectures throughout the second to fourth centuries CE and the exclusive settings created in these, the examples mentioned appear to contradict the opening remark of this chapter, that wider publics were temporarily alluded to particularly during the second and third centuries CE by way of processions. However, both aspects – the acquisition of space for short periods of time as well as the creation of exclusive settings – rather appear as two sides of the same coin and reflect the heterogeneity of cults and their spatial settings that characterize the situation in Roman Imperial times. Rather than asking for the one or other of the two aspects, the question here ought to be, which part of the rituals or what kind of activities associated with the cults actually were, even had to be, carried out into a wider public – and which were meant to be seen by the people immediately present at their performance only. Again, this presents a starting point for further investigations.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an alternative view on sanctuaries in Roman Imperial urban contexts, Ostia in particular, and addresses a number of questions which allow the analysis of cult-sites beyond the distinction of *sacra privata* and *sacra publica*. Introducing various spatial issues, the heterogeneity which characterized sanctuaries in Roman Imperial times could be illustrated. Differences occurred especially in the kind of functions and activities associated with cult-sites. Likewise could be shown how the boundaries of sanctuaries became increasingly blurred and that sharing space on and limiting visibility and accessibility might even have been fostered on occasion. Regarding their spatial settings and the activities hosted in them during Imperial times, the handling of sanctuaries thus reveals a strong pragmatism. Situations that appear little favorable on first glance, like the Flavian interventions in the environs of the Tempio dell'Ara Rotonda, could and have been easily turned beneficial. From these observations we may detain for our understanding of the role sanctuaries had within urban space that it is impossible to regard them as separated from other spheres of daily life, as they were fully embedded into their urban environment.

Guide to Further Reading

As has been indicated above, the role of sanctuaries within urban space still requires investigations on various aspects. To gain a deeper insight into the issues I recommend reading in several directions: Niches and *compita* have recently been dealt with by Lara Anniboletti (e.g., 2011), whereas Kim Bowes addressed the issue of private and public worship including social structures (2008). The studies of Dirk Steuernagel shed light

on various sanctuaries in and outside Ostia, but also provide insights into the general urban transformations of the harbor town and some aspects related to cult (e.g., 2004). A new study on Mithras sanctuaries including the aspects of space and accessibility is available from L. Michael White's recent article (2012), whereas the investigations of Hanna Stöger deal extensively with spatial issues (2011).

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PART VI

Sharing Public Space

CHAPTER 23

Complex Sanctuaries in the Roman Period

Rubina Raja

Complex Sanctuaries

One of the most marked expressions of religious practice in the Roman period was the large number of sanctuaries which already existed and stayed in use, were re-modelled or were constructed ex-novo in the Roman period (also see Chapters 2 and 22). Each city, town and village had one or more sanctuaries. These were in urban contexts more or less architecturally defined and elaborated. Sanctuaries could be placed centrally within the urban fabric, urban cores could grow around sanctuaries (Raja 2013) or later be expanded around newly laid out sanctuaries (Raja 2009) or could be placed outside the cities, in suburban or extra-urban locations (Gros 1996). Many of these sanctuary complexes had a large impact on how the urban landscape and the physical approach to the urban core were perceived. Many suburban sanctuaries were for example placed close to the main roads leading into cities and towns and were therefore the first thing which one encountered when getting closer to a city or upon leaving it. When looking at any city plan from the Roman period one is always confronted with the layout of smaller and larger sanctuaries interspersed amongst all the other complexes which belonged to the repertoire of any Roman period city (Raja 2012)

A chapter on complex sanctuaries must necessarily begin with a definition of what a complex sanctuary is. We do not have Roman sources which explain to us how a complex sanctuary was defined architecturally speaking. For a confirmation of why this is so we just need to look at how many different kinds of sanctuaries have been preserved in the archaeological record across the Roman Empire: from the monumental Sanctuary of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in Baalbek to the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias to the numerous single standing altars dedicated to the Roman emperors, which would have been encountered for example in Roman Athens and which in themselves counted as small sanctuaries as the altar was the defining feature in the any sanctuary. We may indeed want to consider

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whether a set definition of complex sanctuaries is possible or whether rather we must view these as a category of sanctuaries which all bore some similar imprints but all were individual cases expressing local religious identities or, perhaps, local religious patterns.

Architectural Definitions

An attempt at a definition of a complex sanctuary could be as follows: a sanctuary consisting of more architectural features than the altar itself. Since the altar or offering place was the central element in any sanctuary and there would be no sanctuary without the altar, in principle one may define a complex sanctuary as the area – in one way or the other marked off – within which the altar (or more altars) stood. A complex sanctuary is therefore necessarily to be understood as a, to some extent, architecturally defined complex. Complex sanctuaries are here defined as sanctuaries which consisted of one or several architectural elements, which in one way or the other were centered on an altar that was also architecturally defined.

In the ancient terminology, témenos (Greek) and templum (Latin) were the words used for sanctuary in general and simply meant a space which was cut out or marked off from its surroundings, i.e., a space which was signaled to be different from other spaces. A complex sanctuary did not necessarily need a conventional temple (Greek: naós; Latin: aedes). However, temples did become very central features of sanctuaries in the Roman period, although they were not ritual requirements (see Chapter 24). Temples were the house of the deity or deities and therefore they as an architectural feature came to hold a central position in sanctuaries, although the ritual which in principle stood at the center of religious rituals was the sacrifice which took place at the altar outside. Temples also held a number of social, political and religious roles, such as in some cases functioning as meeting places, as treasure houses, as houses for the cult image and for ritual actions (for example Lucian in his *On Dea Syria* describes temple interiors and cult statues and what goes on in the temple and sanctuary to the Syrian goddess Atargatis in Heliopolis in Northern Syria).

Although the temple became an increasingly important architectural feature of complex sanctuaries, the altar, which was the offering place, remained the crucial feature that was central to any sanctuary complex. The Roman period sanctuary of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in Baalbek is a good example of this growing architectural complexity where forecourts and monumental altars, basins, and surrounding walls as well as temples were added over the centuries (Kropp and Lohmann 2011). However, no matter how elaborate a given sanctuary became, there was no sanctuary without an altar.

Certainly there were also natural sanctuaries, which can also be defined as complex, even though they were not defined by architectural settings. These would have included sacred groves, woods, mountains, caves and so on and so forth, which were in principle complex through the several landscape features that would have been important to their overall layout. However, since these were not architecturally defined to any larger extent they will not be treated here.

A complex sanctuary, as defined here, can be described as consisting of one or more of the following elements: altar/s, temple/s, sanctuary walls (teméne) or boundary stones, courtyard/s within the sanctuary precinct or even extending outside of the sanctuary's

walls as well as propylaea (Gros 1996). These courtyards could hold rooms for various usages, such as communal dining (banqueting halls), cooking (kitchens), meeting places and rooms with seating spaces, spectacles, healing, overnight stays as well as storage (e.g., crypts and porticoes).

Complex monumental sanctuaries of the Roman period became a common, if not even obligatory feature in any Roman city or city under Roman rule. Across the Roman Empire we find these sanctuaries particularly in urban contexts and the monumentality of these seem to peak in the mid-second to early-third centuries CE. Large areas within cities were taken up by sanctuaries, which were monumental, showed splendid Roman architectural features in all sorts of combinations and which were centrally placed within the urban landscapes. Of course, there were also suburban sanctuaries and extra-urban ones, but not by far as many as the urban ones. The urban sanctuaries became signature features of the cities and provided a lens through which not only the city's religious life and loyalty towards a certain deity or deities (as well as often the emperor) was expressed, but they were also a window through which urban wealth, both on a communal and individual level, was displayed.

Visibility, Access, Layout and Patterns of Worship

Crucial aspects to consider when dealing with complex sanctuaries in the Roman period are those of visibility and access. That a sanctuary was urban, suburban or extra-urban monumental and visible to the public did not necessarily mean that it was accessible to the public at all points in time. A complex sanctuary should not necessarily be defined as a public sanctuary. Access to sanctuaries could well have been, and was in some known cases, limited either at all times or at certain points in time. This could, for example, be in connection with religious festivals or other particular religious occasions. We do not know much about how access to sanctuaries was managed and in which ways. One might imagine that, for example, priests or temple servants were in charge of controlling access. In the case of the temple in Jerusalem we know from epigraphic evidence that access was regulated between the various courts (Patrich and Edelcopp 2013). Furthermore, sanctuaries which held asylum rights present a particular case since the right to asylum also implies that where asylum was granted to a certain asylum seeker then the opponent would not have been allowed into the sanctuary to follow the asylum seeker.

Archaeological evidence may in some cases also offer possible interpretations of how access may have been managed. First of all, general complex sanctuary architecture shows that many of these could be closed off. The propylaea and their gateways show that the gates could be closed and locked. Some sanctuaries had several courtyards with temples in one or more of the courtyards. Sometimes the access between the various courtyards could also be controlled. This seems to have been the case at Si'a in southern Hauran in Syria, where three courtyards led to a main temple (Dentzer et al. 1985). Each courtyard was architectonically defined by surrounding walls and between each courtyard there was a gateway which could control access between the various courts.

There is no doubt that there were large regional differences between the layout of sanctuaries in the central part of the empire, in the east, west, north and south (Gros 1996 for examples of this; also Chapters 2 and 22 in this volume). Nonetheless, the

impact of Roman rule also made a firm imprint on the way in which many of these sanctuaries were shaped in the Roman period. However, similarities in architectural layout do not necessarily tell much about the nature of the patterns of worship in these sanctuaries as has been pointed out in recent scholarship (Kaizer 2008), implying that form does not necessarily follow function and that functional analysis must be reconsidered. We need to focus much more on the difference between architectural language and monumentality in the Roman period (Thomas 2007) and cultic practice and patterns of worship, which may not have been visible in the architectural layout at all.

A crucial question which remains is whether complex sanctuaries can be used to understand the role of objects in cultural practices of constructing religion and encountering and appropriating such a "religion" as objectified representations of the sacred, as set out in the introduction for this Companion. However, if the concept of "archaeology of religious experience" takes a central stand in the understanding of these complexes, as also suggested in the introduction, there are ways of approaching these complex sanctuaries as complexes in which "religious experiences" would have taken place. In the following, some examples of differing and diverse complex sanctuaries will be presented in order to give an insight into the variation of the material.

Complex Sanctuaries and their Multiple Societal Meanings

On the one hand, complex sanctuaries can be viewed as conventional ways of expressing Roman religion, including a strong focus on places to carry out religious actions and rituals. These sanctuaries were spaces which usually held a number of well-known elements, such as an altar, a temple and spaces for votives as set out above. Furthermore, they usually represented an official civic concept of religion and cult practice. The construction of the sanctuaries had been accepted and approved by the city council and sponsored by public or private money usually coming from the élite of the society. This in itself was expressions of how these complexes were intended to be perceived by the public. They were spaces for civic representations of the sponsor(s) as much as sacred spaces. When Augustus had his forum in Rome constructed with the centrally-placed Mars Ultor temple, this space on the one hand became one of the most important sacred spaces in Rome – the space which expressed the restoration of peace in the world – however, it was most certainly also a space which expressed the wealth and power of Augustus as an individual as much as the leader of the Roman people (Pollini 2012; Zanker 1990). The sanctuaries were in many instances vehicles not so much expressions of religious identities as for the concept of the ideal civic expression of religious identities (see Chapter 32 on questions of how to identify religion on the individual level in ancient everyday life). On the other hand, these sanctuaries can also be viewed as complexes that, through their immense presence, visually, economically and socially speaking, impacted their surroundings in a number of ways which cannot have been said to be conventional.

The gradual but highly visible and radical changes in the layout of the Athenian Agora in the Roman period are one example of this (Raja 2012). These on the one hand underlined particularities of a certain space and thereby tell us something about certain cultural practices of constructing religion and appropriating such a religion to the changing

political, religious and societal circumstances. The Athenian Agora was the physical political and societal core of Athenian civic society but also a space which held important sanctuaries; in the pre-Roman period this had been an open space framed by freestanding porticoes, stoai, but in the period between the mid-first century BCE and mid-first century CE it was imposed upon by the construction of the Odeion of Agrippa and the so-called Temple of Ares. These constructions cluttered the open space and made Roman presence – politically, socially and religiously speaking – visible in this core space so important for Athenian identity.

The developments of the Athenian Agora from the mid-first century AD to the mid-second century AD did not impose on the agora space itself, but first and foremost lined and helped frame the open space. Not only was the Athenian Agora the political and civic center of Athens, but it also held an important position as a complex sacred space and already held several sanctuaries in the pre-Roman period. The societal position of the space was heavily underlined through the developments of the Roman period, particularly with the placing of the so-called Temple of Ares. This was a relocated fifth century BCE temple with a monumental altar standing in front of it. This temple-altar complex faced the Panathenaic Road whilst at the same time underlining the axis on which the Hephaisteion, which was located to the west of it, was laid out. At one and the same time Roman presence, hereunder the influence of Roman religion and cult, was underlined whilst preserving respect for older Greek cults and traditions, such as the Hephaisteion and not least – and perhaps more importantly – the Panathenaic Road which ran through the agora and which was not obstructed at any point in the Roman period. The individual experience of this or these complex sanctuaries in the Athenian Agora may be difficult to grasp; nonetheless, the complexes represent concrete examples of appropriating already-existing locations and meanings, in this case namely Athenian identity (also religious) as objectified by representations of concepts of Roman "sacredness".

Architecturally Defined Complex Sanctuaries of the Roman Period: The Near Eastern Showcase

With the Pax Romana and the ensuing increasing economic prosperity in the Roman Empire from the Augustan period onwards, a time of immense explosion in construction works took place. Combined with the development and improvement of concrete and building techniques in general, monumentality truly took off (Ward-Perkins 1981; Thomas 2007). This process culminated in the Antonine and Severan periods in which some of the most monumental constructions of the Roman period took place (Lichtenberger 2011; Thomas 2007) and which were periods where the most monumental complex sanctuaries are to be found in the Near East. The sanctuaries in Baalbek in modern Lebanon and Gerasa in modern Jordan, which are among the most monumental in the Roman world, were mainly constructed in the second and third centuries CE bearing witness to imperial sponsorship in the provinces, the prosperity of the provinces, local knowledge of Roman architectural ideas and concepts as the local will to shape these sanctuaries in ways which fitted local patterns of worship as well as imperial ones (Kropp and Lohmann 2011; Raja 2009 and 2013).

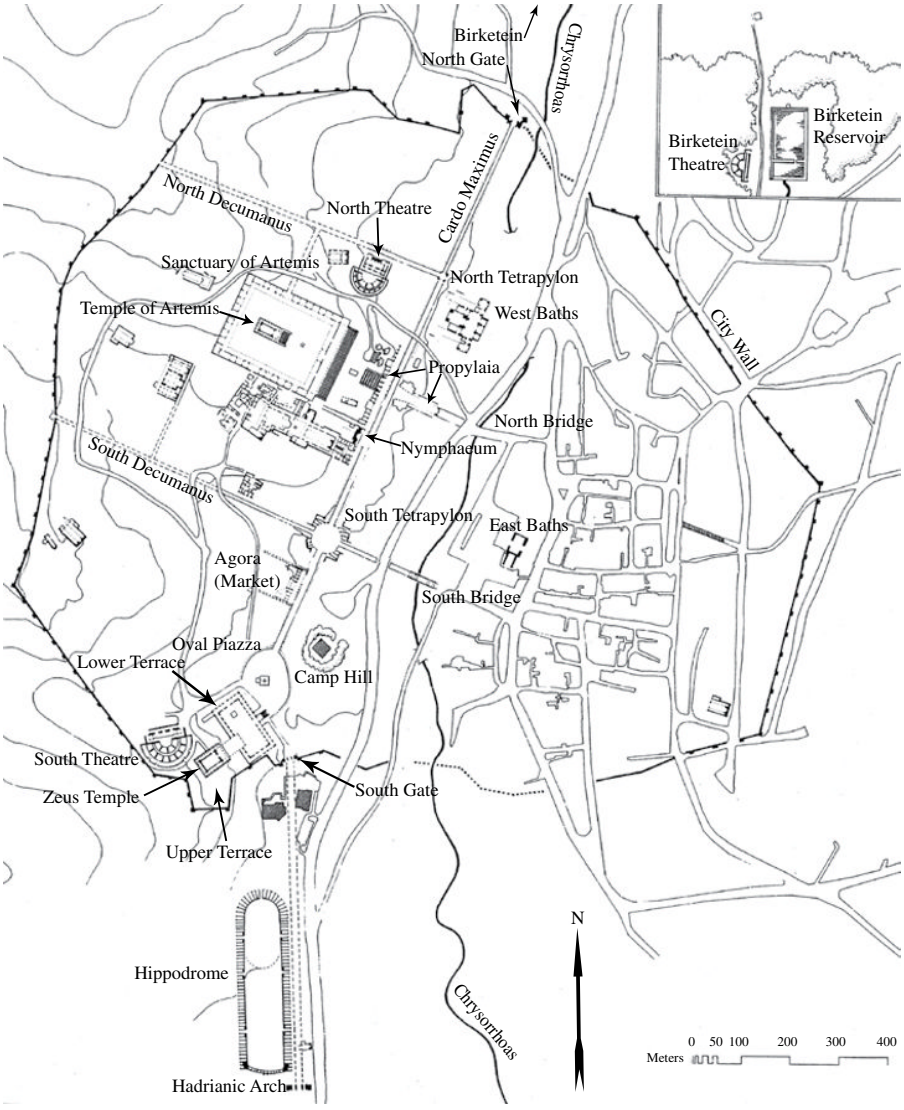

Figure 23.1 Plan of Gerasa with the imposing second century CE Sanctuary of Artemis. After Raja 2012.

The architectural elements which defined such complex sanctuaries could vary but often included a more-or-less canonical set of features. Through the example of the Sanctuary of Artemis in Gerasa we may pin down a number of these elements, which are also to be found in many other open sanctuaries (see Figure 23.1).

The Sanctuary of Artemis, a monumental building project, was begun in the Antonine period in an area which until then seems not to have been part of the Roman city (Lichtenberger and Raja forthcoming). The sanctuary was built on the west bank of the ancient river Chrysorhoas, the ancient Golden River, modern Wadi Jerash. Epigraphic evidence confirms the existence of a sanctuary dedicated to Artemis prior to the Antonine

period in Gerasa. One inscription in Greek dating to 79–80 CE mentions the dedication of porticoes and a pool to Artemis contained within an already-existing sanctuary (Kraeling 1938). However, a location for the earlier cult cannot be given on the basis of the epigraphic and archaeological evidence and remains unknown. There are a total of eleven inscriptions that partly concern the cult of Artemis or which were found within the sanctuary's precinct. Four of these inscriptions are certainly of a pre-Antonine date, but none is earlier than the first century CE. The theory that an earlier sanctuary existed in the same location as the Antonine sanctuary has been suggested by Kraeling. When discussing the general development of the town it is important to consider that the area of the sanctuary may not have formed part of the town itself until the Antonine period and was located outside the religious boundaries of the town (the pomerium).

The Sanctuary of Artemis complex was an impressive undertaking covering an area of roughly 34,000 square meters, which makes it one of the most monumental sanctuaries of its time, almost as large as the famous Jupiter Heliopolitanus sanctuary in Baalbek from the same period. The Sanctuary of Artemis consisted of a series of architectural components including two monumental propylaea (courts in front of the entrance), one located on the east side of the main street, the other one on the west of the main street. Furthermore, the complex included a forecourt, an inner court, and the temple itself which stood in the inner court and in front of which an altar was placed. The sanctuary complex was developed along a main axis that cut directly across the main street. The so-called Sacred Way that ran from the east propylaea, which gave access to a rectangular square that sloped slightly upwards, was flanked by colonnades. The Sacred Way transversed a street that ran parallel to the main street. The colonnades ended in two fountain structures, which created a square opening on to the main street. This trapezoidal square was slightly raised and reached by a short flight of steps. The square created a connection between the two parts of the complex, namely the Sacred Way southeast of the main street and the main part of the sanctuary northwest of the main street. On the northwest side of the main street the first terrace of the western propylaea complex was reached by a monumental and long stairway, seven flights of seven steps each. The western propylaea and the propylaea fountains were dedicated in 150 CE. The temple terrace was reached by yet another stairway, three flights of nine steps each. At the top of the stairs stood a row of columns giving the impression that an upper colonnaded street ran along the temple terrace. The temenos and the temple were built on a rock platform on a hill, which rose gradually from the river and was reached by the monumental stairway. However, the sanctuary was not constructed on the highest point of the hill. The temenos was defined by a quadriporticus. The frontally oriented peripteral temple in the middle of the quadriporticus had 6 by 11 columns. It was placed on a high podium supported by vaulted rooms. The rooms under the temple may have served for cultic purposes or may have served as storage rooms belonging to the sanctuary.

All the described components of the Sanctuary of Artemis are familiar features of the architectural vocabulary of the Roman world. A number of large sanctuaries, consisting of a series of architectural components, were built in the late first, second and early third centuries CE and were located centrally within the urban fabric of many cities across the eastern Roman Empire. Some of the most famous other examples of such monumental complexes are sanctuaries in Apamea (Syria), Baalbek (Lebanon), Palmyra (Syria) and Petra (Jordan), as well as monumental sanctuaries in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and the western provinces (Gros 1996).

One must take into consideration that the construction of a monumental urban sanctuary was something which not only would have cost a lot of money but also would have created work for many people (architects, artisans, craftsmen, stoneworkers, etc.). The visual impact on the landscape of these sanctuaries is also something which needs to be considered carefully as they often hovered over the urban landscapes set on monumental terraces, built on steep slopes and the like. In this way, they not only made firm imprints on the physical landscapes but also on the mental landscapes of the people who encountered them. They were ever-present complexes whether or not ritual actions were taking place there.

The construction of the Sanctuary of Artemis in Gerasa made a huge impact on the urban fabric and was constructed over a relatively short time span. However, the temple itself was never completed and did not receive a roof, but this may have had no impact on the way in which the sanctuary was used until it fell out of use and was converted into a production area and later a church. Although the sanctuary took up such a prominent place in the urban landscape we do not know much about the practice or perception of the cult in the surrounding society. However, what we do know from the epigraphic record is that numerous other cults, which are invisible to us in the archaeological record, were practiced in Gerasa in the Roman period (Kraeling 1938). More than a hundred different names of deities are mentioned in the rich corpus of inscriptions from Gerasa. This fact brings to attention that only focusing on the material remains might give us a skewed impression of the situation in antiquity. We need to take into consideration that several deities may have been worshipped within the same sanctuaries and that many were also worshipped only at altars and did not have particular architecturally-defined complexes dedicated to them.

The (In)visibility of Cults in Architecture: The Cult of the Roman Emperor

The question of what exactly archaeology reflects about the cultic and religious diversity on the ground brings us to the question of whether or not complex sanctuaries reflect the cults or the deities which were worshipped in the sanctuaries. By far the majority of sanctuaries do not reflect through their architecture which cults were worshipped in them. Apart from particular cults, such as that of Mithras for example, whose sanctuaries were mostly recognizable through architecture and layout and betray the cult which they hosted in antiquity to modern archaeologists, most other cults were not so tightly tied to particular architectural layouts. Form did not necessarily follow function and certainly did not follow cult or deity. The so-called Bacchus temple in Baalbek is one good example of this. Although this temple is almost intact and even preserves some internal decorations, such as reliefs, we have no clue which cult was practiced here. Another good example of a cult central to Roman religious life, which in the East to a large degree was invisible in the architectural landscape, is the cult of the Roman emperor, the so-called imperial cult (Price 1984). It is a perfect example of how varying the integration of the central concept of emperor worship in religion of the Roman imperial period was expressed – architecturally or not – across the Roman Empire.

Whereas there was a strong and accepted history and culture bearing on the Hellenistic tradition of ruler worship in Asia Minor – which in the Roman period was expressed through the monumental temples dedicated to the Roman emperor and his family members and deities closely associated with the imperial family, such as Dea Roma – in this part of the Roman world (ibid.), imperial cult was not monumentalized in the same way in the eastern provinces. Although imperial worship is known from a very early point onwards in the imperial period in the eastern provinces (Kropp 2009), sanctuaries and temples dedicated to the emperor do not seem to have won ground on the same level as in other regions of the empire. One major exception to this situation, however, is the imperial cult temples erected by Herod in the East (ibid.). These bear heavily on Hellenistic models, such as those found on Kos, Lindos and in Pergamon, and may be interpreted as Herod's attempt to reframe and position himself within a Hellenistic tradition in the early imperial period.

However, imperial worship certainly held an important role in the societies in the East. However, in most cases there was an emphasis on integrating the cult into already firmly-established cult centers and sanctuaries, such as most likely was the case in the Sanctuary of Zeus in Gerasa (Raja 2013).

A contrasting example from the west of the Roman Empire is the extremely visible imperial cult complex in Tarraco, in modern Spain. The city was chosen as the provincial capital of the province Hispania Citerior and therefore received the right to construct a monumental complex dedicated to imperial worship. This complex, which in many ways drew upon core Roman models and in particular the imperial Roman fora complexes, to a large degree consisted of large open spaces and may be viewed as a complex sanctuary according to the definition applied in this chapter.

Another thought-provoking example of the integration of imperial cult worship is the construction of the small round temple dedicated to Augustus and Roma on the Athenian Acropolis, which was most likely placed in front of the Parthenon. On the one hand, this temple underlined Roman imperial power, but on the other it was not a monument which took center stage on the Acropolis. It brings to the forefront the ways in which imperial cult were or were not integrated into already-existing sanctuaries. In the case of the temple on the Athenian Acropolis, one should also note the complicated relationship of the Athenians to Rome and Roman rule, which makes the presence of imperial cult worship on the Acropolis even more loaded with ideas of imposed rule and unruly subjects. Pausanias in his description of Athens tells us that the Athena statue on the Acropolis turned towards Rome and spat blood in order to underline the conflictual relationship between the Athenians and Rome in the early imperial period.

As an example at the other end of the spectrum stands the so-called Sebasteion in Aphrodisias in Caria, Asia Minor. This until now unique complex gives insight into a way in which a local family gave their interpretation of how imperial cult worship was to be understood and expressed (Smith 1987, 1988, 1990) in a part of the Roman Empire which had a very different tradition of how to integrate ruler worship into the urban landscape. With several rows of reliefs showing, among other things, emperors and their families as well as personifications of the Roman provinces, a strong tie to the center of political power, Rome, was being spun in a local context by a local élite family. The Sebasteion consisted of a broad central paved way, flanked by porticos on each side decorated with the reliefs mentioned above, leading to a temple standing on a high podium

at the end of the complex; this certainly draws upon Roman architectural models, such as for example the Forum of Augustus in Rome. In this way, the knowledge about architectural traditions and their cultural and religious implications were underlined and brought to the forefront through being displayed in a centrally-situated complex in the provincial city of Aphrodisias. The city did in the early imperial period have close ties to Rome through the returned imperial freedman Gaius Julius Zoilus and through the centuries tried to uphold these ties by sending embassies to Rome (Reynolds 1982).

Use and Perception: The Role and Function of Complex Sanctuaries

The Sanctuary of Bel in Palmyra provides an excellent example of a sanctuary which offers evidence for use by various groups – not through its architecture but through the finds from the sanctuary. The so-called banqueting tesserae, found for the largest parts in the drains leading from the banqueting hall within the temenos, provide evidence that at certain points in time organized events took place there to celebrate deceased priests in the sanctuary (Meznil du Buisson 1962; Ingholt, Seyrig, and Starcky 1955; Kaizer 2002).

The small but elaborately decorated tesserae, of which more than a thousand have been found, measured approximately 2–3 cm and were 0.3–0.5 cm thick (see Figure 23.2). They were mostly made of clay with imprints of a banqueting priest on one side and of a deity or deities on the other side alongside a number of other symbols, such as zodiac signs, signs for various deities, etc.

Although the tesserae have a highly standardized iconography depicting priests and deities in general, they are still extremely individual in their pictorial language which combines the standard elements with other symbols, architecture, signet seals, inscriptions and other attributes, such as altars, servants, wreaths, etc.

Without the tesserae there would have been no way of knowing that certain groups used the banqueting hall within the sanctuary precinct at certain points in time. However, through the tesserae we can determine that various groups, some signified by their names such as "the sons of…" (Kaizer 2002), used the sanctuary or at least some of its facilities at certain points in time. Knowing that the tesserae gave access to the sanctuary complex, we may also assume that they excluded other than the invited participants and that access to the sanctuary therefore was limited at least at these specific points in time. Perhaps access was granted to the banqueting hall if one held a tessera. If one did not, one might have had to either be seated in the porticoes, for example, or would not have been allowed to take part in the event at all.

The tesserae also tell us about the worship of a number of deities, which we otherwise do not know to have been worshipped within the precinct of the Sanctuary of Bel. This is a reminder, as with the inscriptions from Gerasa, that a sanctuary which we know as dedicated to a certain deity could also be used for the worship of other deities. The architecture does not tell us about the number of deities which were worshipped at certain points in time. Most importantly, the tesserae provide clear evidence for objects, in this case quite small ones, which played a role in a cultural practice of constructing religion and appropriating it as an objectified representation of the sacred.

(a)

(b)

Figure 23.2 Tessera from Palmyra showing (a) a reclining priest on the obverse and (b) offering servants on the reverse. Photo by Rubina Raja.

The tesserae show a high awareness of how ideas of the sacred and religious was constructed and depicted. They were materializations of ideas and ideals of how priests could be celebrated in the presence of the divine. They are extremely relevant examples of the archaeology of religious experience, and when combined with the monumental architectural setting within which these spectacles took place they bring to life an exemplary case study of how a complex sanctuary could have been used. Another source which tells us about tesserae as entrance tickets at cultic spectacles is to be found in *AE* 1929: 161.

Conclusion

As shown above there was no one imperial or Roman koiné tradition which was applied to all complex sanctuaries across the Mediterranean, although Roman religion penetrated all parts of the empire. Nonetheless, most complex sanctuaries of the Roman period shared architectural features and layouts which made them recognizable as belonging to the Roman cultural sphere. Regions such as Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, the Near East, North Africa and Spain all provide regional and local features which, when studied in their own right, give insight into how religious experiences were shaped and communicated on local, regional and imperial levels.

Certainly there were overarching architectural concepts of complex sanctuaries and general layouts which can be found across the Roman Empire. Many sanctuaries look generic at first glance and it is hardly possible from their architecture to tell to which cults they were dedicated. This and many other details only become visible when looking at decorations, the way in which the various architectural elements related to each other within the sanctuary itself, the visual vocabulary which was used to communicate the history of the sanctuary as well as the inscriptions. What may seem generic on the surface most often tends to tell a much more complex history when the detail is studied.

Guide to Further Reading

Gros (1996) remains a good introduction to Roman period sanctuaries and temples. The standard work of Ward-Perkins (1981) remains a solid introduction to concepts of Roman architecture and monumentality. Furthermore, the much broader ranging overview monograph by Wightman (2007) serves as an appetizer and holds rich references. Lichtenberger (2003) and Kaizer (2008) provide insight into a number of case studies pertaining to the Roman Near East with a focus on the local traits in the religious culture.

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CHAPTER 24

Temples and Temple Interiors

Henner von Hesberg

Introduction: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

The main room in a temple or sacred building usually contains a cult image, which in turn is publicly worshipped (see Chapter 21). The tension between space and image, which mainly exists between the participants in the cult and the idea of the numinous within the cult image, starts at the boundaries of the sanctuary and not with the interior of the temple. But the numinosity of a temple interior is caused not only by visual perception, but involves a whole number of senses, for example by the smell of burning incense or acoustic signals. Moreover, the acts of worship that took place in its context included acts of ritual performance, which brought together the revered, temple staff and the public. A temple interior was thus a complex phenomenon with many different aspects, many of which are unfortunately but poorly understood due to the state of the material evidence. Nevertheless, an analysis of this subject must try to include such factors, even if they are not visible in the archaeology (Gladigow 1986, 1990; Burkert 1997; Auffarth 2006).

In Greco-Roman culture, which stands at the center of our consideration, we are generally confronted with a vast number of variants. Besides the well-known public temples, we sometimes have cases of cults in houses or clubs that become merged with or develop into public worship. Cult images, for example, can also be abstract in nature – non-iconic or even non-existent, as may have been the case in certain mystery cults. Generally speaking, however, the deity is transferred into the premises either by means of the image or in some kind of abstract, e.g., ritual, way.

In Egypt we have a great quantity of different deities whose images are constantly involved in ritual acts, so they usually remain relatively small and are housed in a naiskos, often made of expensive and prestigious materials considered to be divine. Within the temples they are placed in the innermost part of the interior, where they are hidden from

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

Figure 24.1 The so-called Temple of Bacchus in Baalbek. Photo by Rubina Raja.

the public and are only brought out for feasts as part of special rituals or to be carried in processions (Robins 2005).

In the Assyrian culture, the sacred quality of the image is also linked to certain materials, but is also further enhanced by reserving the carving of such images to certain craftsmen who work in the temples of the gods and create images akin to sphyrelata, i.e., thin metal reliefs on wood. These creations were usually not very large and generally only saw the light of day during processions, since they were generally stored in the innermost sanctuary of the temple and surrounded by additional attributes. In both cultures, the layout of the temples created an extreme degree of separation between cult images and public and simultaneously provided the appropriate frame for the rituals in which they were presented. An interior similar to that of Greek and Roman temples, in which a larger community of worshipers could admire the images in their everyday location, did not exist (Collins 2005; Dick 2005; Lewis 2005; Walls 2005).

The Different Effects of Images and their Mise-en-scène

The interior of the temple acquires its specific quality from the cult image venerated there by the group of worshipers (see Chapter 28). The challenge for the Greek and Roman builders consisted of the development of techniques that could express the numinous qualities of the divine image through sensory experiences. This could be done by means of associated stories about its fall from heaven or – as in Samos – how it had been washed up by the sea, or by giving it an extremely elaborate design that surpassed those of other images of the time, as is the case for the Sphyrelata of Dreros or the chryselephantine statues of the Classical period. A third possible strategy was to stage the image with theatrical flourishes, as did Antiochus IV by installing a curtain in the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. The interior of the temples had to respond to all these strategies to increase the effect of the images on the worshippers (Gruben and Berve 1961; Drerup 1969; Gruben 1966; Kalpaxis 1976; Mazarakis Ainian 1988; Hellmann 2006; Boschung 2007).

In addition, the aura of the numinous could be underlined by incorporating other cult statues or elements of nature, such as lighting effects, springs or chasms, but also indirectly by the presence of altars, votive offerings or other testimonies of worship. The inaccessibility of the image could be created, for example, by using various forms of bases, by establishing barriers, such as pools, or by employing different designs for floors, walls or of the ceiling. Windows or artificial lighting added further illumination effects to the images. Other objects, such as tables, candelabras and torches, were likewise distributed to maximize their effect, which was sometimes accentuated by the burning of incense.

All these effects could not simply be arbitrarily mixed and matched but depended on the general development of religious practice at the time. Giant images of gold and ivory were a typical feature of the Classical period, which did not continue into the Hellenistic period but gave way to other solutions, although as copies of the Athena Parthenos continued to be used as Hellenistic cult images, these images continued to be used as well (Despinis 1979, 2005; Scheer 2000; Fehr 2001; Nick 2002).

One challenge, therefore, lies in understanding the different strategies used in creating the Divine in their historical context. What religious and aesthetic reasons led to the very different presentations of the Divine, and by whom were these processes controlled? The difficulty of finding answers depends on the complexity of the events. The images of Antiochus III and his wife Laodike, for example, that were placed by that of Dionysos in his temple at Teos, immediately caused this old divinity to be seen differently. But such an act depended not only on the citizens of Teos but was the product of many convergent processes. It is thus not easy to identify the turning points and determine the protagonists (Cain 1995; Faulstich 1997; Bergbach-Bitter 2008).

Spaces and their Structural Determination by Cultural Tradition

By contrast with cults of eastern origin, the Greek and Roman temples seem quite closely related to one another. However, these two Mediterranean cultures are themselves divided by the differences in their specific architectural patterns and in the ways deities were worshipped and represented. Deviations in these areas have been taken as fundamental differences between these cultures and, as a result, differences between Greek and Roman temples have been considered as structural features of these cultures as such. Although more recent studies do pay more attention to specific historical contexts, it is still very important to investigate how strong traditions and subconscious dispositions, influenced as they are by religious rules and rituals, could affect further developments over longer periods.

It is tempting to understand the history of the temple's interior in Greco-Roman antiquity as a continuous development, which started with simple rooms where the group of worshippers came together to have their meals in front of the images. With the formation of the monumental temple building, the cult statue was first transferred to the back of the cella. In the Classical period, its epiphanic effect was then emphasized by increasing its size and the quality of its material. Subsequently, this pattern remained relatively intact, even though individual components could certainly be changed and the

interiors were splendidly enriched. As a result, we might, for example, find a huge number of statues or pictures of gods within a given temple and it might be difficult to decide which one was the "real" cult image. It might even be possible that this original image no longer existed but had given way to an accumulation of venerated images. Sometimes we also find sequences of images that seem to have a genealogy of sorts. The broad strokes with which I have painted this picture cannot do justice to the many subtleties of these developments, to the different qualities of the images and the various forms of rooms, but a detailed description is not possible in the space available here. I will therefore limit myself to explaining certain standard situations and focus on two main steps in the developments in Greek and Roman culture. One should also note that, while there are many influences from other cultures from around the Mediterranean and beyond, these can only be touched upon here (Gladigow 1994; Brouskari 1997; Donohue 1997; Auffarth 2010).

Social Disposition

There were two main ways of creating a distinct space for a cult image. The first consists of protecting the image itself, often by putting up a canopy. The predecessor of the Temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis in Athens was a simple shelter, constructed from beautifully-shaped blocks. Its orientation towards the altar created a close relationship with the worshippers. The second strategy consists of creating a spacious hall for the meetings of the worshipping community into which the image is placed (Romano 1988; Brouskari 1997).

The definition of interior space is informed by this dichotomy. Anyhow, the cities of the Greco-Roman world are characterized by large temples of their main deities. The image of a central cult revered by the whole community of a city accordingly required a highly-visible building with structured surroundings and, as a result, the interior of that building now came to play an important role. As the main temples of the Greek poleis or the Capitolia of Roman cities so magnificently show, the image was to be given an abstract and overwhelming appearance for all to see.

These public cults provided the models for the cult-buildings of smaller communities. Here the proximity to the faithful was crucial and the distance to the image was thus reduced. This reduction could also take effect on an abstract level, for example, when a representation of Asklepios and Hygieia was made to emphasize family aspects. The deity could also be represented as an actor as in the case of Mithras, who is shown killing the bull. Becoming embedded into a certain local cultic configuration reduced the importance of a deity; this can be observed in the case of Bendis, a Thracian goddess of the hunt that was transmitted from Thrace to Athens and had a cult in the Piraeus, before practically vanishing in the fourth century BCE. The situation is similar to that of Pan, whose cult was often set up in caves. Besides these examples, there was a wealth of other options, some with opposite trends in interior design. When the magistri of the cult of the Lares established their chapels (compitalia) in the vici of Rome under Augustus, they imitated the great marble temples for their appearance even though they were to house only the small images of the lares and genii (Roux 1961; Schörner and Goette 2004; Mertens 2006).

Greece: Geometric and Archaic Period

The temple, as it characterizes the Greek cities of the Archaic and Classical period, originated in the Geometric period. No similar buildings are known from the Minoan-Mycenaean period and it is possible that the palaces performed some of their socio-religious functions. From the Geometric period onwards, however, remarkably large houses suddenly served to gather a community around a central hearth. The image of the deity had its place against the back wall, but not always in a central position; a famous example is the group of Sphyrelata of the small Cretan village of Dreros that represent Apollo, Artemis and Leto. The space inside these buildings was not subdivided for ritual and religious purposes – an observation that is significant insofar as image and worshippers became more and more separated in later periods. The aura of these early images was rather created by their method of manufacture, size and other accessories.

Since the eighth century BCE and with the growing articulation of the polis the temples became more and more monumental, many of them reaching lengths of 30.5 meters. In addition, the ornaments also served to make these qualities more visible. The inner space transformed into a long corridor, at the end of which the cult image had its place. There is no clear linear development of these constellations; instead, the tension between the different zones of the temple, the entrance, the cella and the image at its back wall leads to different solutions. The design of the individual segments, of the pillars, the porch or the doors, or of the interior space likewise augmented the emphasis on the cult image at the end of this movement. One of the best preserved examples is offered by the temple of Hera at Olympia in which external appearance and the interior work together to maximize the monumentality.

During the Geometric and Archaic period, the temple in general and its interior in particular served to create a strong link between the community and the cult image, and we see a noticeable shift towards a more abstract and isolated presentation of the image. While in the early periods it had been included in the meeting of the community during the ritual dinners, the image became more and more isolated in the interior over time and the dining rituals came to be excluded from the buildings. This was an expression of the newly-defined position of the image, which was important: on the one hand it was available to everyone, but on the other it was secluded in the interior to increase its numinous effect (Drerup 1969; Gruben 1966; Kalpaxis 1976; Mazarakis Ainian 1988; Hellmann 2006; Boschung 2007; Lippolis, Livadiotti, and Rocco 2007; Mylonopoulos 2010).

Classical and Hellenistic Greece

In the Classical period this disposition changed completely. The images of gold and ivory, which were set up in the years after 430 BCE in the temple of Zeus at Olympia and in the Parthenon in Athens, required new interiors because they were far larger than life. In Olympia, the temple had already been built thirty years earlier, whilst in Athens the time-gap was only about ten years. Here, the extensive interior with columns running all around the image of Athena Parthenos underlined the powerful effect of this image, while the conventional positioning in the temple at Olympia created a conflict between

image and interior, which later found its expression in the slightly ironical statement that Zeus when he rose from his throne, would break the roof of the temple.

The solution found for the Parthenon was crucial for the subsequent period, as is shown by the string of varied solutions it inspired in many temples of the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE. The temple in Epidauros is a good example, as are the temples of Athena in Tegea or that of Zeus in Nemea. The surrounding colonnades underlined the autonomous manifestation of the interior, which was also expressed by employing other architectural orders or by their close connection with the walls.

Whilst during the archaic and early classical period the columns in the interior of the temples did not usually differ from those of the outer order, and thus emphasized the strong coherence of the entire building, the interior later became a sort of precious room, introverted and closed around itself like a small treasure chest.

At the same time, new forms and effects were used to attract visitors, as is already visible in the late Archaic Temple of Athena at Paestum in which Ionic columns were used in front of the cella in contrast to the Doric columns that surrounded the rest of the exterior. In the various temples of Athens these zones of transition later came to be emphasized by means of the inner friezes.

The overwhelming aesthetic effect of the cult images in the Classical period was probably the result of the increase in ostensive power demonstrations in these times, in which these images were used by the cities. The best-known example is the Athena Parthenos, laden with gold plates which formed part of the treasure of the Athenian confederacy, and therefore had to be weighed each year. The statue of Zeus at Olympia was an expression of the new position of Elis, now organized as the main polis connected to the sanctuary; the situation was probably similar at Epidauros with the temple and image of Asklepios. Besides these new forms, however, the old images of the gods still existed and kept the old tradition alive.

These new forms were crucial for further developments. The isolation of the interior of the temples corresponded to certain changes in the appearance of the images of the deities themselves. It has often been observed that, particularly in the fourth century BCE, these images seem to be concentrating on themselves, giving the viewer the impression that they are tranquil, quietly reposing in themselves. The experience of epiphany was thus created in a new way, causing the viewer to appear even more surprised by contrast. This seems to agree with the idea that the images should not be more than life-sized. The statue of Aphrodite by Praxiteles, which was commissioned by the citizens of Knidos, showed the goddess naked for the first time, as far as we know. Whether it was placed in a round building depends on the interpretation of a possible copy in the villa of Hadrian at Tivoli. But tholoi with their circular cellae, which became common in this period, were certainly well suited to bring out the new quality of these effects (Despinis 1979, 2005; Elsner 1996; Scheer 2000; Fehr 2001; Nick 2002; Mertens 2006).

A special case, the temple of Eshmun in Sidon, provides us with a significant sidelight on Greek understanding. The outer form follows the Greek prototype to the letter, but the image is enclosed in a sort of canopy with columns following Iranian models. The details are not well preserved, but in contrast to the Greek models which aim to create distance between image and visitors, the interior of the temple at Sidon allows the image to dominate (Stucky 2005).

The Hellenistic period is characterized by different strategies to emphasize the cult image. Even royal residential towns often feature only small temples with corresponding interiors. The Pergamene kings never had – or never carried out – the idea of transforming the ancient temple of Athena on their acropolis into a magnificent building based on the Athenian model, although they did imitate this model in some other respects and sufficient financial resources were certainly available. The same is true even of Alexandria and the Ptolemies.

The splendor of the interior was achieved by means other than size. Often there are huge bases with groups of images, as in Lykosura or Klaros. Often, images of rulers were added, such as in the Temple of Hera at Pergamon or in the Temple of Dionysos at Teos. The appearance was also enriched by canopies, various forms of interior boundaries, honorary statues and mosaic floors. In a particularly unusual case, Antiochus IV dedicated a purple curtain to shroud the statue of Zeus in the temple at Olympia. This undoubtedly theatrically increased the epiphanic effect. The new temple of the poleis were, however, often very large, such as those in Magnesia on the M. for Artemis or for Apollo at Klaros.

No dominant pattern emerges in the design of the interior spaces at this time. Everything seems to have been possible, from rich colonnades lining the walls, as in the temple of Leto at the Xanthian Letoon, to the simple smooth inner walls. Even the Archaic and early Classical concept of rows of columns that lead into the interior towards the cult image was used again (with some modifications) in the temples of Artemis at Sardis and Magnesia, where the anteroom was more strongly structured with various forms of transitions and barriers (Cain 1995; Faulstich 1997; Bergbach-Bitter 2008; Mylonopoulos 2011).

Italy and Rome from the Eighth to the First Centuries BCE

The form of cult images in the early temples of central Italy is not very well documented. Apparently, many were simple effigies, mostly made of clay, of which little remains. Only a few examples have been identified. The temple interiors remained simple, sometimes divided into a series of chambers side by side. One of the best-known examples is surely the temple of the triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva on the Capitoline Hill in Rome.

In the Republican era, from the third century BC onwards, temples and their interiors were laid out in ways that often were similar to those of the Hellenistic East, but there are certainly differences in some characteristic details. After his victory in 117 BC, Metellus Dalmaticus, for example, renewed the Temple of Castor and Pollux on the Roman Forum. The width of the foundations of the cella indicates a colonnade in front of the interior walls of an unknown layout. At the moment we have no other examples from Rome, but smaller towns of Central Italy, such as Tivoli with the temple of Hercules, Cori with the temple of Castor and Pollux, or Pompeii with the temple of the Capitoline gods, certainly provide parallels. Thus the cult image is emphasized by a canopy, but also placed inside a magnificent hall with huge dimensions – created using real or painted columns to line the walls, thereby augmenting the aura of the image. To facilitate this effect, the interior is ennobled by adding decoration, by lavishly adorning the floors and

surely also the (lost) ceilings, or further objects such as the Omphalos in the temple of Apollo at Pompeii (Martin 1987; Hölscher 2007; Schollmeyer 2008).

Italy and Rome: The Empire

In the early Empire, the interior of the temple changed again, also due to the availability of new materials such as marble and precious stones. A good example is offered by the temple of Apollo, built in the years around 20 BCE near the theater of Marcellus. Alessandro Viscogliosi has reconstructed the interior almost completely. An unusually rich, two-story architecture adorned the long sides of the cella. This construction offered the frame for large series of statues of which, unfortunately, nothing is known. Before the back wall, on a pedestal, stood the cult image. We can be reasonably certain that it used to be more than twice as large as life. This part of the temple, however, lacks elaborate architectural decoration, and it is not clear whether it is really missing or whether other forms of presentation were chosen, as in the Forum of Augustus where a painted background gave the illusion of an expensive curtain. This form of spatial organization is found in all the temples from that period onwards, for example in that of Mars Ultor where the cult statue had its place in a large apse.

That valuable sculptures and paintings were located inside the temples is attested, for example, in the case of the Temple of Concord in the Roman Forum. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 35.66; 131; 144) mentions a bound Marsyas, a painting by Zeuxis, a Dionysus made by Nikias and a Cassandra sculpted by Theodore and a series of bronze statues (34.73; 77; 80; 89), as well as a number of groups, including Apollo and Hera by Baton, Leto with Apollo and Diana by Euphranor, Aesculapius and Hygeia by Niceratus, Ares and Hermes by Piston, and Demeter, Hera and Athena by Stennides. Augustus donated four obsidian elephants, while Livia dedicated an onyx cameo said to have been once owned by Polycrates of Samos (36.196; 37.4). Unlike in Republican temples, these objects were now assigned well-defined and proper places within the walls of the temple. They offered a rich mythological program that was not directly connected to the goddess of the temple but seems more akin to a collection of precious treasures. This becomes evident if we compare paintings in Greek temples, which were more closely connected to the story of the town (see Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.4.122–3 for the temple of Athena in Syracuse). The Pantheon in Rome gives an impression of the splendor gracing the interiors of these new buildings (Nielsen and Poulsen 1992; Ganzert 1996; Viscogliosi 1996; Stamper 2005).

In the smaller towns of Italy, this model was either adopted in a simplified form, as is shown by the temple of Fortuna Augusta in Pompeii, or modified, as in the Temple of Augustus and Roma in Pozzuoli. However, in many cases concrete evidence for the design of the interiors is lacking, as their precious equipment was later reused for other purposes.

Oriental cults showed specific forms of religious buildings, such as the Temple of Isis and Serapis in the Campus Martius which was specially promoted by the Flavian emperors (Lembke 1994). A small-scale distribution of the cult images is shown by the Severan Forma Urbis, a marble plan of ancient Rome. Thereby, some special characteristics of such Oriental cults were inserted into the Roman environment although one must note

that the monumentality of the temple from Egypt was lacking. In these aspects, the specific quality of the traditional temple interiors became more evident, because their enormous size simultaneously communicates the importance of the deities to the viewer. *Auctoritas* therefore finds its expression in size and space, whereas for the Oriental cults other values seem to have been at play.

The communities of Mithras, on the other hand, offered a different connection between worship and image. When the initiates met for their feasts, they reclined on benches in close proximity to the image, which presented Mithras as an active victor. Thus an almost familial connection between the faithful and their deity was created, a form used in many varieties in similar cults with small communities, and can also be observed earlier in the Greek sanctuaries of Pan and the Nymphs of Asklepios. It thus emerges that the image and its surroundings were mainly dependent on the composition of the worshipping community.

In the design of the temples in the Roman provinces many local traditions remained present. In Egypt, the traditional plans are largely maintained. In the interiors of the temples of Syria, which generally followed the patterns of the Roman Empire, we find separated chambers or canopies designed for the preparation or appearance of relatively small images (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938). Service areas and staircases allowed for the involvement of the images in certain cult activities, such as the appearance before a larger audience, or in processions. In North Africa, on the other hand, we do not find rich interiors, but the images are more often presented in apses or the cellae are combined with other chambers into one unit. The temples may also feature extremely high podiums (Kleinwächter 2001; Eingartner 2005). In the Northwestern provinces the form of the so-called Gallic temple with a surrounding portico was chosen for the veneration of local deities. Their cellae were usually small, allowing little room for more complex forms of architectural decoration. Even the cult images themselves cannot have been large. This type of building thus blends indigenous traditions with Roman forms (Derks and Roymans 1994; Faust and Schneider 2002).

Temples that follow the models of Rome and Italy, such as "Le Cigognier" in Avenches, the harbor temple in Xanten, the Temple of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea, to name only a few examples, are also present in all provinces. The preferences of the local builders are not always as easy to identify as in the case of the so-called Gallic temples dedicated to local deities. Different motivations have to be taken into consideration, be they specific local or religious traditions, the desire to recall a specific past connected with such traditions or the intent to imitate the models provided by the major centers and of course mainly those of Rome itself.

Late Antiquity and Christianity

From the third and fourth centuries CE onwards, the number of temples declined significantly. In the few surviving examples, the splendor of the inner decoration is severely diminished. A good example is the Temple of Jupiter in the Palace of Diocletian at Split, where a reconstruction with niches and columns is out of the question. Only the coffered vault resting on the simple smooth walls below served to present the image as under a canopy. This quality stands out even further when compared with the interior of

Figure 24.2 The interior of the so-called Temple of Bacchus in Baalbek. Photo by Rubina Raja.

the mausoleum of the Emperor which is decorated in the traditional way. The simple interior, on the other hand, focuses the visitor's gaze entirely on the image of the deity. The temple in Gamzigrad is designed similarly in that it consisted of a vaulted interior with two large wall niches. In addition, the foundations with a base of about 150 cm squared provide an idea of the dimensions of the cult image which, compared to the earlier temples, remains small. Apparently a less sensory presence of the image was now sought: an experience of the goddess based on abstract qualities is also reflected in the philosophy of the time (Čanak-Medić 1978; Marasović and Marasović 1969).

The situation was different, however, in the Temple of Venus-Roma, which was restored by Maxentius. There, in contrast to the construction of Hadrian's time, the cult image was centered by the newly-built semi-circular niches, while the earlier version had followed Greek models and appeared more classical.

In the great Christian basilicas there were of course no cult images, but the image of dominating Christ is presented in the mosaic decoration of the semi-domes in ways similar to those of the smaller communities mentioned above. A similar strategy of using the images was probably chosen, because Christ was not present in an image but more as an acting person contextualized by other surrounding images (Scheer 2001; Brenk 2010).

Guide to Further Reading

The remarks by Auffarth (2010) are a good introduction to the problems surrounding the materialization of images. Brenk (2010) shows the tradition of using cult images even in Christian iconography. Despinis (1979) offers a wonderful example of a reconstruction of an original cult image, most of which are lost, and Mylonopoulos (2010) is useful for its reflections on divine images as a form of communication.

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CHAPTER 25

Theater

Susanne Gödde

Introduction: Theater and Cult

Throughout Antiquity, Greek – and later Roman – theater was closely tied to religious practice due to its integration into religious festivals and its spatial proximity to temples and altars. Whereas in classical Athens the performances of tragedies, comedies, and satyr plays had been restricted to the cult of Dionysus, this exclusivity gradually dissolved, with the result that plays could, especially in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, also be performed at festivals in honor of other gods. Starting with the first Roman stone theater, the famous Theater of Pompey in Rome, dedicated in 55 BCE, one occasionally finds the combination of theater and temple within a single structure, unified by a strict spatial arrangement along a shared axis. In his standard monograph, John Arthur Hanson (1959) described these structures as "theater-temples", but their function is subject to ongoing debate (cf. Sear 2006: 44–5). Despite the historical and "genetic" proximity between theater and cult, it remains difficult to decide whether the theater of Antiquity was a sacred or profane institution, not least because the border between these two spheres – especially in Greek culture – is so fluid.

Archaeological evidence, however, suggests that theatrical performances also took place as part of cult – in forms quite independent of the written evidence of the surviving plays. Inge Nielsen (2002) and others have shown that structures similar to theaters existed in many Minoan and Mycenian palace- and temple-complexes. The most well-known are the stepped "theatral areas" in Cnossus and Phaestum (Nielsen 2002: 69–76). Temples of later date also show assembly and audience areas (*theatra*) which may have been used for cultic performances (cf. Anti 1947: 27–51; Sear 2006: 44–6; critical of the idea that these were predecessors of later theaters: Pöhlmann 1981: 136; Isler 2002: 260). Based on the assumption that so-called "cultic dramas" were staged in these locations, structures of this kind are termed "cultic theaters" or "sanctuary theaters" in modern

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research. The category of "cultic drama" may include phenomena such as the scenic adaptation of divine myths (compare the possible performances of Demeter's search for Persephone during the mysteries at Eleusis), ritual *hieros gamos* (attested, e.g., for the Anthesteria), and the cultic transformation of festival participants into animals, e.g., into foals (in the Spartan cult of the Leukippidae) or bears (in the cult of Artemis at Brauron) (cf. Nielsen 2002: 83; on ritual theater and ritual origins in general: Csapo and Miller 2007; on theater rituals: Chaniotis 2007).

The performative analogy of drama and ritual also affects the "genealogical" model that Aristotle applies in his *Poetics* (Chapter 4): whereas he has comedy derive from phallic songs performed at cultic processions, tragedy allegedly stemmed from two sources, namely dithyramb, a cultic song originally linked solely to Dionysus (Zimmermann 1992; Ceccarelli and Milanezi 2007: 198; Kowalzig and Wilson 2013), and the "satirical" (*satyrikon*; Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449 a 19ff.), which probably refers not to the satyr play in its developed form (Seidensticker 1999: 8), but to the use of a certain meter, the trochaic tetrameter, along with the dances and frolics of its performance (Lämmle 2013: 21; 99–107). The name of the genre itself, *tragôdia*, "goat song", seems also to indicate a cultic context of early tragedy: Walter Burkert (1966) reconstructed early tragedy as a "song for the prize of a goat" or as a "song at the sacrifice of a goat". All these possible origins – phallic song, dithyramb, *satyrikon* and goat sacrifice – are linked with the Dionysian sphere.

Since Hellenistic times at the latest, however, the Dionysian elements of theatrical performances began to be missed, as is shown by the saying *ouden pros ton Dionyson* – "nothing to do with Dionysus" – preserved in Zenobius' collection of proverbs (5.40) and the Suda lexicon (Adler o 806) (see further Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 124–6; Winkler and Zeitlin 1990; Bierl 1991: 6f. with n. 9 and 10; Lämmle 2013). This view seems to be somewhat confirmed by the plots of the surviving plays which hardly feature Dionysus and his cult – with the prominent exception of Euripides' *Bacchae* and a number of fragmentary plays. Some scholars assign this complaint about the lack of references to Dionysus to the early stages of the genre's development. In this view, the addition of the satyr play to the Great Dionysia in 509 BCE (alternative dating: 502/1 BCE) was a reaction to this alleged loss of connection to Dionysus. The satyr play, it is claimed, brought back those sorely missed, frivolous, Dionysian aspects (Seidensticker 1999: 8 with n. 48, 37; Seidensticker 2005: 48f.).

More recently, scholars have attempted to critically assess the factual basis of the saying and to rediscover the Dionysian element in structural (roleplay; peripety) and subversive (festival) elements of the plays, but also in their motifs (frenzy/*mania*). These interpretations identify the connection to the cultic frame of the performances not in the plots and their protagonists, but in the poetics of the plays (e.g., Goldhill 1990; Bierl 1991; Schlesier 1993; criticism: Scullion 2002; 2005).

Athens: The Theater of Dionysus

Athens provides us with the best and most comprehensive evidence for the urban – political and religious – environment of the theater in the early Classical and Classical periods. Before the Theater of Dionysus became the venue of dramatic performances,

the Athenians attended them on the agora, probably in the sacred precinct of Dionysus *Lenaeus*, the Lenaeum (Kolb 1981: 29–58), seated in temporary wooden stands (*ikria*). Around 500 BCE, the performances were moved to the precinct of Dionysus *Eleuthereus* on the south-east slope of the acropolis. In this new location the stands continued to be built of wood, as were the other elements of the theater, including the *skênê*, a hut situated behind the performance space which the actors used to change costumes, and possibly a kind of low podium that served as a stage (on wooden theaters see Csapo 2007: 103–8).

The fifth century BCE saw the development of the *prohedria*, permanent stone seats for priests and other dignitaries, as well as the addition of rows of stone seats for privileged members of the audience. The canonical shape of the theater, which we can still see in Athens today, with its semicircular stone cavea encompassing half the circular orchestra, and its stone *skênê*, are the result of the theater's later amplification under the direction of Lycurgus around 330 BCE. This canonical type of architecture only became widespread in the early Hellenistic period and is best attested at Epidaurus.

The development of the Athenian Theater of Dionysus between 500 and 330 BCE has been the subject of controversial discussion for more than 100 years. The matter is not trivial, for the bone of contention was a highly-charged symbol – the circle – which supposedly showed that the origins of theater lay in the choral dance, here imagined as a round dance. One has now come to recognize that most early theaters possessed a rectangular or trapezoid performance space, simply because it was easier to build. The seating area was structured accordingly and thus consisted of a central block with two wings (see Figure 25.1). Archaeological evidence in the form of rectangular blocks that marked off orchestra and seating area supports this shape (summary of evidence: Junker 2004; first proposed by Anti 1947 and Gebhardt 1974). Definitely rectilinear early Greek theaters are – amongst others and besides the Theater of Dionysus at Athens – the

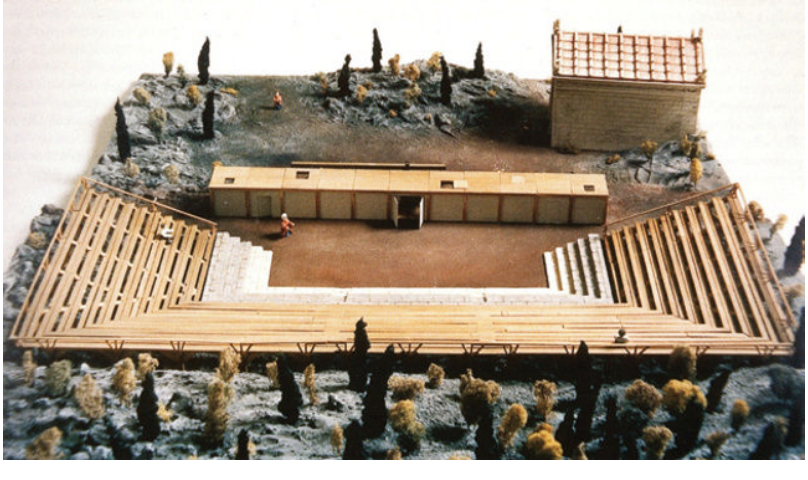

Figure 25.1 Model of the Theater of Dionysus, German Museum of Theater, Munich; in Moraw, Susanne and Eckehart Nölle (eds) (2002). *Die Geburt des Theaters in der griechischen Antike*, Mainz. Figure 22.

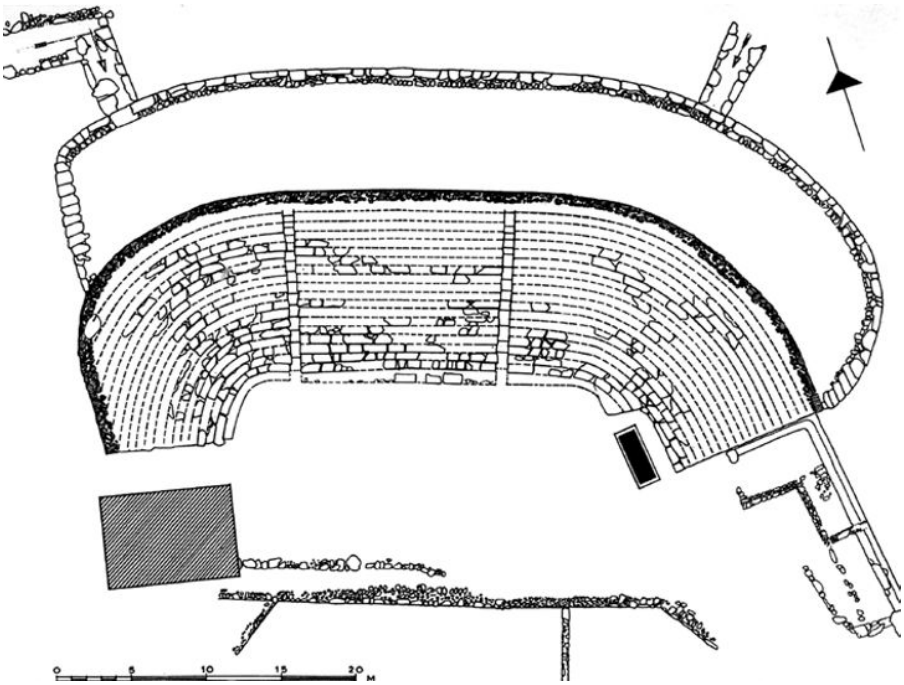

Figure 25.2 Theater of Thorikos, in Moraw, Susanne and Eckehart Nölle (eds) (2002). *Die Geburt des Theaters in der griechischen Antike*, Mainz. Figure 32.

theaters of Thorikos (still well visible today: see Figure 25.2), Trachones and Argos (Ginouvès 1972).

The notion of an early circular orchestra, which had been postulated by the first excavators of the Theater of Dionysus (Dörpfeld and Reisch in 1896), long remained virulent (Blänsdorf 1987: 87). Aristotle's derivation of tragedy from dithyramb, performed by choruses also known as *kyklioi choroi*, seemed to lend support to this assumption. Modern interpreters were eager to identify the circle as a religious or political symbol in the history of theater (e.g., Burmeister 2006: 19). Quite recently, Peter Wilson interpreted the circular arrangement of the dithyramb chorus, which he saw as corresponding to the circular shape of the orchestra, as symbolic of the new political structure implemented by Cleisthenes (Wilson 2000: 17 with n. 40).

Whereas the alleged circular shape cannot support an argument for a religious semantics, the site of the Athenian Theater of Dionysus and its proximity to the adjacent temple of Dionysus *Eleuthereus* (see, e.g., the plan in Wilson 2000: 210, fig. 9) undoubtedly prove that it was incorporated into the cult of the god. Dramatic performances were staged exclusively as part of the state festivals of Dionysus, and the program of the largest of these, the City Dionysia, may provide further answers to our question regarding the religious connections of ancient theater (the following draws on Gödde 2008, 2010; fundamental are: Pickard-Cambridge 1968; Blume 1978; Goldhill 1990; Csapo and Slater 1995).

Athens: The City Dionysia

The Great(er) or City Dionysia took place every year at the end of March and beginning of April (in the Athenian month of Elaphêbolion), and coincided with the resumption of shipping activity in spring. This festival was twice reformed and restructured, first by the tyrant Peisistratos between 536 and 533 BCE, and again around 509 BCE in the aftermath of Cleisthenes' reforms. The political significance of the Great Dionysia may be exemplified by the fact that their organization was entrusted to the eponymous *archon*, a polis magistrate who was, unlike the *archôn basileus*, largely responsible for political rather than cultic matters.

Preparations for the festival consisted of introducing the god into the theater. To accomplish this, the cult image of Dionysus was brought out of the temple on the day before the festival, and taken to an altar near the academy, on the outskirts of the city. In the evening, it was then taken back to the sacred precinct and finally introduced into the theater itself. The dominant opinion holds that this introduction of the god was a reminiscence of the original introduction of his cult to Athens from Eleutherai, a town on the border between Attica and Boeotia, on the grounds that the Great Dionysia were dedicated to Dionysus *Eleuthereus* (e.g., Connor 1989; for a different interpretation see Sourvinou-Inwood 1994, 2003).

After the god's presence in the theater had been established, the actual festival began on the next day with a spectacular procession. Not only did almost the entire city participate, but the sequence of groups in the procession also mirrored the social structure of the polis: citizens were separate from foreigners, men from women, and young people from old. The *ephebes*, young men being trained for their future military duties, were responsible for a particularly prestigious task, namely leading the main sacrifice for Dionysus, a splendid bull (IG 2^2 1006.12–3, 121 BCE; Csapo and Slater 1995: 111, no. 11; on the role of the *ephebes* cf. Winkler 1990; on the social hierarchy of the participants see Spineto 2011). The various functionaries of the festival were of course also accorded their places of honor. Most prominent were the resplendently-attired *chorêgoí*, who had agreed to finance the dithyrambic and dramatic choruses and organized their rehearsals. A striking element of this ceremony was the so-called phallophory, the carrying of wooden *phalli* that were specially made for the festival every year and partly contributed by Athenian allies. The course of the procession cannot be reconstructed with any accuracy, but it obviously stopped at various altars in the city for choral performances of hymns – a clear indicator that the festival of Dionysus could incorporate other deities (Xenophon, *On the Cavalry Commander* 3.2, ca. 388–355 BCE; Csapo and Slater 1995: 115, no. 27).

The procession culminated in a grand sacrifice in the sacred precinct of Dionysus; 200 to 300 animals were slaughtered and consumed in a popular banquet. Only afterwards did the activities in the theater itself begin, but only – if we can attach credence to the late evidence of the Suda (ca. 1000 CE) – once it had been cleansed with the blood of sacrificed piglets and had thus been designated as a "sacred space". However, before the audience could enjoy the first choral performances, the dithyramb competition, and – on the following days – the dramatic performances, they first had to witness various political ceremonies. These clearly indicate that the festival was also understood as a forum for the

self-representation of the polis: The customary libation, for example, was not, as one might expect, performed by the priest of Dionysus, but by the ten elected *stratêgoi* (Plutarch, *Cimon* 8.7–9, ca. 115 CE but referring to an event in 468 BCE; Csapo and Slater 1995: 161, no. 112). During the heyday of the Athenian league, the libations were followed by the presentation of the allies' tribute before the audience in the theater (Isocrates, *On the Peace* 82, 356 BCE, referring to the fifth century BCE; cf. Csapo and Slater 1995: 117, no. 35A). This gesture acquires added political significance from the fact that the Great Dionysia were often attended by representatives of other cities, especially those enrolled in the league, so that Athens was able to present itself before the eyes of an 'internal' audience. Another celebrated event was the parade of the war orphans who were coming of age (Isocrates, *On the Peace* 82). The city had been paying for their upbringing and now presented them with a full set of armor and declared them full citizens. Finally, a herald proclaimed the names of those citizens who had beneficially served their city, and they were honored with wreaths (Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 120, delivered 330 BCE; cf. Csapo and Slater 1995: 118–9, no. 37; on crowning formulae conveyed by inscriptions see Chaniotis 2007: 54–9).

Chorus and Chorêgia

Only after these political ceremonies had concluded did the artistic performances begin. The second half of the first day of the festival featured the competition of the dithyramb choruses and the second day saw the production of five comedies, with each of the three final days being devoted to a tragic tetralogy (three tragedies and a satyr play). The dithyramb competition seems to be crucial in our search for the religio-political dimension of the festival and its archaeological traces. On the one hand, we are dealing with choral poetry, a very old and traditionally religious form of performance that was also a fixed element of every festival for the gods. On the other hand, the dithyramb competition reflects the restructuring of the polis by Cleisthenes in 509 BCE, since each of the newly-established tribes had to contribute one chorus of boys and one of men to the dithyramb competition (Zimmermann 1992: 35–8; Wilson 2000: 17). Thirdly, this competition was made directly manifest in the Athenian cityscape, because the sponsors of victorious choruses, the *chorêgoi*, had impressive choregic monuments erected on the so-called street of the tripods.

These impressive bronze tripods, measuring 3–5 meters in height, were exhibited on richly decorated bases, atop little temples (*naiskoi*), or columns that lined a road intended specifically for this purpose and called *tripodes* in Antiquity (Pausanias 1.20.1; on the Athenian tripods: Amandry 1976; Scholl 2002; Goette 2007). The ancient Athenian cityscape thus contained a very visible – and permanent – memorial of the successful liturgies of the *chorêgoi*, and it remains open to debate whether, as Peter Wilson claims, this overt celebration of the victories was at odds with the development of democracy (2000: 198–262; cf. also Goette 2007).

Only seven foundations of bases belonging to choregic monuments have been excavated so far (Travlos 1971: 566), and three monuments are still known today, partly in reconstruction (see Wilson 2000: 220–35, figs. 11–20; Goette 2007: 132–5): the complete Monument of Lysicrates, erected at the eastern foot of the acropolis and

consisting of a square base crowned by a six-column pseudomonopteros in the Corinthian order; the Monument of Thrasyllus on the southern slope of the acropolis, above the theater, which was described by Pausanias (1.20.1) and featured a copy of the façade of the southern wing of the acropolis *propylaea*; and finally the Monument of Nicias that was situated to the west of the temenos of Dionysus and showed the façade of a six-column Doric temple. All three dedications date from the last third of the fourth century BCE.

Is it now possible to treat the choregic monuments – which due to their public exhibition are regularly described as dedications in scholarship – as manifestations of the religious dimension of theater? The course of the street of the tripods does provide interesting information pertaining to this question: Pausanias mentions (1.20.1) that this road began at the *prytaneum*. This was situated on the old agora, which in turn has now been localized east of the acropolis. The remains of the monument bases show that the street ended at the sacred precinct of Dionysus *Eleuthereus* and the theater (Wilson 2000: figs. 9 and 10). If one follows more recent research in assuming that the unidentified Lenaeum, the location of the dramatic competitions before the first wooden construction of the Theater of Dionysus, was not situated on the later new agora northwest of the acropolis (this view still found in Kolb 1981), but rather near the prytaneum on the older agora from the sixth century BCE, it seems that the street of the tripods connected the two sanctuaries of Dionysus, that of Dionysus *Lenaeus* and that of Dionysus *Eleuthereus*. The dedications of the *chorêgoi* would thus have been deliberately incorporated into a specific ritual semiotics (Wilson 2000: 213; cf. also Travlos 1971: 566 with the older localization of Lenaeum and old agora; and Sourvinou-Inwood 1994: passim, who claims that the *prytaneum* featured prominently in the procession of the Great Dionysia in early times).

The Plays

So in what ways did the plays themselves – the plots of tragedies, comedies and satyr plays – contribute to an understanding of the theater as a setting for the negotiation of religious issues? Although the performed plays should not be considered simply as ritual actions, both ancient texts and modern scholarship occasionally suggest that they could be seen as 'dedications' to the god Dionysus. This impression may be partly due to the existence of the dramatic chorus which can create a sense of continuity between ritual – in the sense of hymn and prayer – and drama (Parker 2005: 138; on the chorus of tragedy: Calame 1995; Foley 2003; comedy: Bierl 2001; on the chorus "as consecrated to the gods": Wilson 2000: 11). And if the theater really was cleansed with piglet blood before the festival began, then the choral and dramatic performances certainly acquired a different symbolic status than if they had been staged on 'unhallowed' ground.

The genre's handling of religion, however, appears to be at least analytical, if not outright critical. This can be exemplified by the dramatization and problematization of some heroes' tales, especially in Sophoclean tragedy. The focus of these plots lies not on glory and immortality but on suffering and death, the significance of which remains unspecified: when Heracles finds his self-determined, but also divinely predestined end on the pyre in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, there is no mention of the apotheosis that appears in other sources; and while *Oedipus at Colonus* does show Oedipus being elevated to the

status of 'holy man' by the gods after a life of torment and suffering and proclaims that his grave can accord the Athenians protection, it remains unclear how the cult that is intended to preserve his memory is to be performed, given that the location of his grave remains a secret – or even a taboo. As Robert Parker (2005: 140) has put it, the tragedians, at least partially, disenchanted the heroic age and their treatment of the heroes does not obey hagiographic interests.

Euripides' tragedies are pre-eminent in their exploration of the religio-political dimension of myth (see Wildberg 2002; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: Ch. 3). This is especially true of his dramatized aetiologies that forge links between mythical prehistory and the cultural and political order of contemporary Athens: prominent cases in point are the *Ion* and the fragmentary *Erechtheus*. At first glance, aetiologies, which are often proclaimed by a *deus ex machina* who announces the protagonist's designation for worship (e.g., at the end of *Hippolytus* or *Iphigenia in Tauris*), seem to provide a sense of 'closure', pacifying and mending the suffering of the plot. It would probably be more accurate, however, to say that the function of the divinely ordained cult foundation lies primarily in preserving the memory of the torment of the mythical protagonists, without resorting to any solution or happy ending.

But such religio-political strategies can also be subjected to critical scrutiny: *Ion*, for example, 'explains' how Athens became the mother city of the Ionians, but founds this function on a story of violence and intrigue that forces even Apollo, god of truth and divination, to tell lies. Other Euripidean plays likewise open the gods up to criticism: the *Bacchae* show Dionysus punishing the Thebans in a brutal and – in Cadmus' view – unjustified fashion for their rejection of his cult, and in *Hippolytus* the injured honor of Aphrodite, neglected by the protagonist, results in two deaths. The frenzy the gods inflict on the titular hero of *Heracles* lacks any kind of logical explanation and seems entirely arbitrary. Labeling these tragedies as dealing with 'unjustly punishing gods' might however be too reductionist; for on another level, these cruel divine punishments serve the tragedian in exposing the dark depths of human emotion: the *Bacchae* show the results of suppressed desire as well as the loss of control caused by ecstasy, while *Hippolytus* thematizes the destructive force of Phaedra's love.

Other elements of dramatic action that stem from ritual practice, for example the evocation of the dead (especially in Aeschylus) or the half legal, half religious institution of supplication (Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women*; Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*; Euripides' *Heraclids* and *Suppliant Women*) could be expounded on here, but would take us too far outside the scope of an 'archaeology of religion'. We may sum up by saying that tragedies not only play a part in keeping the stories of heroes and gods present and current, but also subject them to an intellectual debate by focusing on political and anthropological aporia and conflicts relevant to the contemporaries.

The fatalistic world view of tragedy, however, is balanced out by comedy and satyr play. In comedy, the sphere of religion is usually associated with moments of happiness, festive enjoyment, and peace, for instance when Dikaiopolis celebrates the phallic procession typical of the Rural Dionysia as a sign of his own personal peace in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, or when many plays celebrate the solution of the conflict with a festive procession and the announcement of a sacrificial banquet or wedding. Comedy's licentious criticism and freedom to mock prominent citizens has, however, often led to it being connected with another feature of ancient festivals – especially those of Dionysus

and Demeter – namely aischrology, the religiously sanctioned verbal abuse of festival participants, for example in the so-called bridge songs (*gephyrismoi*) during the procession of the *mystai* to Eleusis. The fact that two forms of transgression were permitted at theatrical festivals in honor of Dionysus – the evocation of suffering and lament in tragedy, usually excluded from festivals of the gods, and the harsh abuse of politicians and other dignitaries in comedy – can certainly be identified as the Dionysian aspect of ancient theater.

The Hellenistic Period

In the late fourth and early third centuries, Greek theater was substantially expanded, but also became more differentiated in the process. This observation applies not only to its geographical proliferation but also to its architecture and to the cults it was involved in (on the sources for the increasing significance of theater in the Hellenistic period: Le Guen 1995: 60, n. 5, 64–6). The most important architectural changes are the further development of the *skênê* and the adjacent stage of the *proskênion*. Opposite the *cavea*, the theater is now dominated by a multistory wall that hides a more elaborate internal structure and is directly connected to the actual stage, the now significantly raised *proskênion*, which formerly had been hardly developed. To balance out the more elaborate *skênê*, the stands were also substantially enlarged and now enclosed the *orchêstra* in a semi-circle reaching all the way to the stage building. The extension of the *koilon* necessitated the removal of the *parodoi*: the actors now entered from the doors of the *skênê*. The background to the dramatic action was provided not only by decorative architectural features of the *skênê*, but also by exchangeable image panels that were hung in the intercolumnia of the *proskênion*. These features created illusionistic effects and resulted in a new perception of the theatrical space. Overall, the architecture of Hellenistic theaters became significantly more monumental, but also more "aesthetic" (Von Hesberg 2009: 288–98), owing not least to its greater coherence.

The consequences for the dramatic action and the political connotation of the theater are subject to debate. For a long time, the *communis opinio* was that the changes in architecture and performance practice were the result of the changes in the political constitutions of the Hellenistic cities. On the basis of the strong interdependence between democracy and theater in the Classical period, historians of theater viewed the further institutional development of theater as a result of the end of polis autonomy in the period of the successors. On occasion, it was argued that the high stage resulted in a greater dissociation between actors and audience and thus, it was suggested, made the audience feel less involved. This argument is hardly convincing, given that the new architecture results in a stronger visual and structural connection between the cavea and the stage building. The most commonly-adduced indicator for this alleged decline of the theater in post-Classical times, however, was the chorus' loss of importance. The increasing relinquishment of the chorus and its exclusion from the action is explained by reference to the lack of connection between theater and polis community in the Hellenistic era (e.g., Rehm 2007: 191). This allegedly allowed for the introduction of the raised stage that made manifest the orchestra's loss of significance and replaced it as the place of dramatic action (Blänsdorf 1987: 89).

Regarding the political function of the theater in the Hellenistic period, two contradictory observations can be made that will have to be reconciled with further analysis. On the one hand, recent studies have shown that the hypothesis of the cultural and political decline of this institution, its reduction to 'mere entertainment', cannot be maintained. A ground-breaking article by Brigitte Le Guen (1995) was especially important in putting an end to this traditional prejudice. Le Guen developed a view of theater in the Hellenistic period wherein the return to the classics (which by no means excluded new productions) also implicitly referenced their political program; she further argued that the incorporation of an active citizen body into the ceremonies, e.g., the honoring of meritorious citizens (see also Chaniotis 2007), during the theatrical festivals made this visible. The divide between Classical and Hellenistic theatrical culture must thus be carefully bridged.

At the same time, one must observe that the Hellenistic kings certainly appropriated the theater as a forum of their self-fashioning (cf. e.g., Le Guen 2007 on the Attalids in Teos and Pergamum). Famous examples are the Athenian modification of the Dionysia in honor of their liberator Demetrius Poliorcetes at the end of the fourth century (Le Guen 1995: 78f. with n. 84; Von Hesberg 2009: 295) and the magnificent procession on occasion of the Alexandrian Dionysia under Ptolemy II during which the king was hailed as a new Dionysus (cf. Kallixeinos of Rhodes, *FGrHist* 627 F1). Such political use of the theater by Hellenistic kings was long regarded as abuse of a site reserved for art and religion (cf. Rehm 2007: 190–2). This evaluation must be cautiously corrected: since the beginning, this institution had always served as a forum not only for artistic performances but also for political programs and their – even imperialistic – successes. That the Hellenistic kings used this positively-connoted political space of the city and the presence of a large part of the citizen community to be hailed as liberators and saviors of the people is thus no radical departure from this original purpose of the theater.

Another aspect of the theater's post-classical development that was long neglected by scholars concerns its dissociation from the cult of Dionysus. It is true that the newly-created organizational structure, consisting in associations of so-called Dionysian artists (*technites*), which included poets, actors, singers, musicians, and even prop masters, continued to treat Dionysus as the patron of theater. But since the third century at the latest, dramatic competitions can also be found as elements of the festivals of many other gods. A particularly prominent example of this is provided by a third century inscription from Tegea in Arcadia (Dittenberger 1915–24: no. 1080) that lists the victories of a tragic actor who had successfully competed not only in the Athenian Dionysia, but also in the Sotêria in Delphi in honor of Apollo, Zeus *Sotêr* and Nike, in the Ptolemaia in Alexandria (where he won at boxing), in the Heraia, probably at Argos, and in the Naia, a festival of Zeus at Dodona (cf. Csapo and Slater 1995: test. 163; Le Guen 1995: 64f.; Ceccarelli and Milanezi 2007: 197; Scullion 2002: 112f.; Scullion p. 114 gives the evidence for dramatic competitions as part of a festival of Zeus at Dion as early as the end of the fifth century BCE, as well as for other, also very early, theaters in shrines of gods other than Dionysus, especially Apollo; for further inscriptions attesting dramatic competitions as part of Hellenistic festivals for gods: Csapo and Slater 1995: test. 161; 162; 165A; test. 166; test. 169; on dramatic performances in Delphi and on Delos see also Sifakis 1967; on the theaters in the shrine of Apollo on Cyprus: Cecarrelli and Milanezi 2007: 197f.).

Rome and the Roman Empire

In Republican Rome, and later under the Empire, festivals of gods remained one of the main occasions for dramatic performances, but private events, such as funerals, were now also possible settings. In the history of Roman theater, Dionysus withdraws still further into the background than he had in the Hellenistic cities – even if Tertullian's third-century demonization of theater wants to persuade us of the opposite (*On the Spectacles* 5.4; 10.7). Theatrical performances (*ludi scaenici*) as part of festivals for gods are attested for the ludi Romani (from 364 BCE) and the ludi Plebei (from 200 BCE), both of which were held in honor of Jupiter, and for the ludi Apollinares (from 221 BCE). They were particularly prominent in the ludi Megalenses (from 204 BCE) and were probably added to the ludi Cerialis under Augustus (on the frequency of theatrical performances in the Roman festival calendar and its increase under the Empire, see e.g., Fugmann 1988: 7). We must assume that wooden stages and stands were used before the great stone theaters were built, as was the case in archaic and early Classical Greece; it is very likely that performances were staged outside the temples of the gods (Cicero, *On the Responses of the Haruspices* 24; cf. Hanson 1959: 15f.). Classical drama, i.e., tragedy and comedy, was popular only from about 240 BCE (Livius Andronicus) to the beginning of the first century BCE, and was increasingly superseded by mime and pantomime under the Empire. The basic principle that the occasions, but not the contents, of the performances were cultic in nature generally applies also to Roman theater.

Architecturally, Roman theater only manifested in the cityscape of Rome from the mid-first century BCE onwards (albeit a little earlier in the rest of Italy); – before that, stone theaters and permanent seating for audiences had been prohibited by the senate for fear of riotous crowds (senate decree of 151 BCE; cf. Isler 2002; Sear 2006: 56). The first stone theater of Rome, built by Cn. Pompeius Magnus in the year 55 BCE on the Field of Mars, can be considered the architectural prototype of Roman theater, and is also remarkable as a new variant in the history of the connections between cult and theater. Roman theaters, including the Theatrum Pompeii, were no longer built into slopes, but supported by substructures and could thus be constructed anywhere. As in Hellenistic times, the high *scaena frons* is richly decorated and architecturally subdivided by two to three tiers of colonnades. The architectural coherence of the complex – Pompey's theater has a total diameter of 150 meters – i.e., the seamless connection of cavea and stage building, was continued, with the result that the small semi-circular orchestra, which accommodated the seats of honor, left little room for a chorus.

The main peculiarity of the *theatrum Pompeium* is its incorporation of a temple to Venus Victrix that crowned the theater above the cavea, at the apex of the theater's central axis (Hanson 1959: 43–55 – see here Figure 25.3). The steps leading up to the temple thus simultaneously functioned as seats of the cavea and the actors on stage could address not only the audience but also the goddess above. This cultic veneer was balanced out by an area dedicated more to the social needs of the audience: behind the back wall of the stage the complex included an approximately 180 × 135 meter quadriporticus with an enclosed garden area and thus provided leisure space for a large number of people both before and after the performances.

The close spatial correspondence between temple and theater that was further enhanced by their axial correlation has been variously and controversially interpreted.

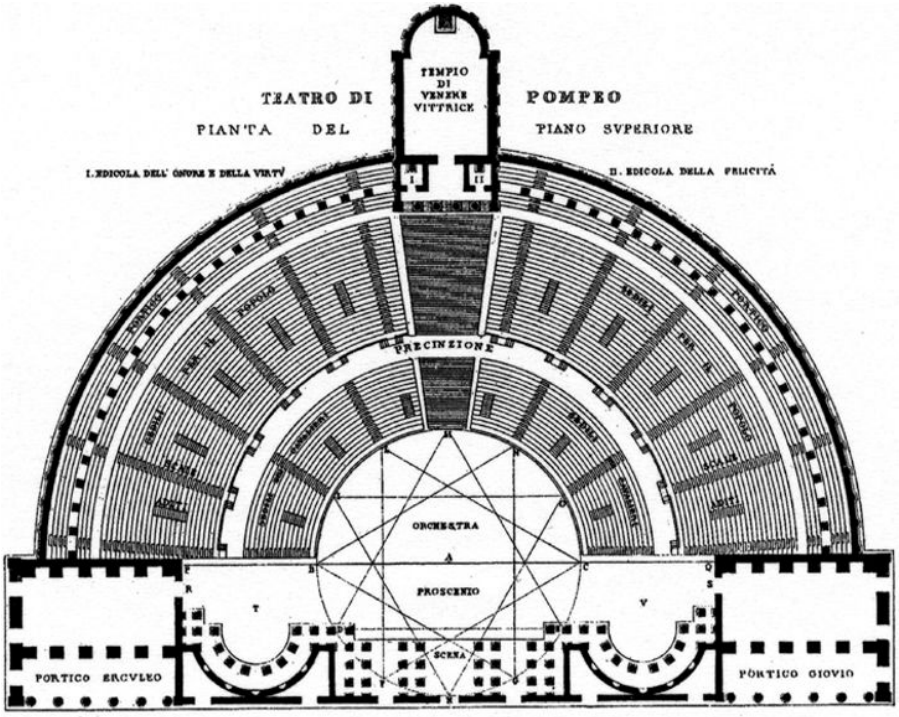

Figure 25.3 Theatrum Pompeii with temple of Venus Victrix, in: Hansen, John A. (1959). *Roman Theater-Temples*, Princeton. Figure 16. Courtesy of Princeton University Press.

Already in Antiquity (Tertullian, *On the Spectacles* 10.5), Pompey was accused of having used this combination to undermine the antitheatrical reservations of the Roman senators and justify his theater under the guise of piety, despite their fears of its amorality and political risks (summarized in Hanson 1959: 47; cf. Sear 2006: 58). If we apply common sense, however, this explanation seems very unlikely, given the sheer size of the pompous theater complex that clearly dominates the relatively small temple.

Two other explanations should thus be considered, both of which may simultaneously be valid. On the one hand, one can show that axial correlation between temple and theater possessed a certain tradition in Italy (though not in Greece). Other Republican 'theater-temples' (as described by John Hanson) show structures similar to that of Pompey's theater in Rome: this is the case in Gabii (Hanson 1959: 31; Sear 2006: 45), Tivoli (Hanson 1959: 33; Sear 2006: 45 and plan 24), and Palestrina (Hanson 1959: 34f. and Figures 9–11; Sear 2006: 45 and plan 24). Frank Sear distinguishes between these complexes and mere sanctuary or cult theaters (2006: 45f.). He thus seems to presuppose that the former were used for performances of more strongly literary or at least not exclusively cultic drama. Other theater-temples, inspired by that of Pompey, continued this tradition into the Empire, but this type can hardly be considered dominant given the great variety of theaters found in the Roman Empire. Worthy of note are the theater of Vienne in France that was part of a large sacred precinct in honor of

Magna Mater (Blänsdorf 1987: 93; Fugmann 1988: fig. 26–7), the theater of Leptis Magna in Libya (Fugmann 1988: Figures 23–5), the one in Jol or Caesarea in Algeria as well as the theaters in Augst near Basel in Switzerland (Blänsdorf 1987: 92; Fugmann 1988: 12) and in Trier (Fugmann 1988: 12; Figures 30–2). The last two complexes differ from the Theater of Pompey in that the temple is situated behind the back wall of the stage, but can be seen by the audience through a large opening. The Birketein theater in Gerasa, Jordan (Segal 1995: 71; Sear 2006: 46 and plan 296) that was the site of the Maiumas festival in honor of Aphrodite and Dionysus, condemned by Libanius as immoral (*Orations* 41.16; 50.11), is probably a sanctuary theater rather than a theater-temple.

However, this rather slim tradition, as impressive as its existence may be, is not enough to explain the rationale behind Pompey's plans. As Hanson and other scholars have argued, the temple has to be considered as part of a program of political representation for Pompey, especially if one bears in mind the political significance of Venus that had been established by Caesar, if not earlier. This combination of theater and temple is thus neither a concession to piety nor a smokescreen, but rather recalls Hellenistic ruler cult (Hanson 1959: 47–54; Blänsdorf 1987: 92; Fugmann 1988: 28, n. 20). Pompey employed the theater to set the stage for himself and used the visually impressive architecture of the theater and the presence of Venus, responsible as she was for Rome's victories, to provide his political personality with a potent and meaningful frame.

This selective look at the connections between cult and drama, religion and theater in Greco-Roman Antiquity, from archaic Athens to the Roman Empire, has – taken *cum grano salis* – revealed a remarkably high degree of continuity. Masked and dramatic performance was integrated into festivals of gods throughout Antiquity, and obviously not mainly because drama was considered sacred action but rather because the festival provided a suitable festive frame that attracted a large audience – which to a Greek or Roman mind certainly included the gods. Furthermore, festivals of the gods expressed the politico-religious self-understanding of the celebrating cities, to which theater made substantial contributions.

To speak of decline, of a loss of gravity, dignity, and finally a waste of religious fervor, is problematical, especially since we can hardly reconstruct how the Athenian audience – with its lacking knowledge of Hegel and Nietzsche – responded to the tragedies of the three great tragedians. The Empire then saw the rise of mime and pantomime, and thus of a form of performative art that emphasized song and dance over spoken dialogue, but probably included a commentary on mythological tradition that was by no means less subtle and was now mediated by a masterful form of body-art. The experience of theater in Antiquity was evidently less about sacrality and more about festiveness, combined with a certain degree of licentiousness that allowed for both mockery and criticism. A certain critical distance from the gods and their stories thus constitutes a further element of continuity in the history of ancient theater – and despite the presence of the celebrated god such criticism was evidently not regarded as blasphemy. As far as architecture is concerned, the increasing improvement of the theaters as audiovisual spaces, but also as spaces of political representation, is crucial to note. Bearing in mind, however, that the gods of Antiquity always possessed a certain political agency, it would probably be misleading to describe this as a secularisation of theater.

Guide to Further Reading

For the reconstruction of the Great Dionysia and their programme see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) and Blume (1978); the political dimension of the festival is analyzed by Goldhill (1990); on the institution of *chorêgia* and the complex social significance of chorus culture Wilson (2000) is the standard work. A compilation of all written sources relating to the theatrical festivals from the Classical period to the Roman Empire is provided by Csapo and Slater (1995), for the inscriptional records see now Millis and Olson (2012). An overview of the architectural development of (Greek) theater is given by Blänsdorf (1987), Goette (1995), and Junker (2004); the so-called cultic theaters are presented in Nielsen (2002). For the debate surrounding the significance of Dionysus for ancient theater see Winkler and Zeitlin (1990) and the critical evaluation of the state of research in Scullion (2002, 2005). Dionysus' presence and function in the dramatic texts has been studied by Bierl (1991). The 'theology' of the plays is the subject of Wildberg (2002), Sourvinou-Inwood (2003), and Parker (2005: 136–52). Le Guen (1995) informatively confronts old prejudices concerning the political decline of theater in the Hellenistic period. A lot of new material on the theatrical festivals of the Hellenistic cities can be found in Wilson (2007). The older study by Sifakis (1967) also remains useful. On the Roman 'theater-temples' Hanson (1959) is unsurpassed. For an overview and architectural details of Roman theaters see Sear (2006).

Translation into English: Henry Heitmann-Gordon

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CHAPTER 26

The Archaeology of Processions

Eftychia Stavrianopoulou

The Theoretical Framework

> "A procession is not just a journey from A to B; it matters where A and B are located, and who is doing the journey. But to properly be able to elicit what the purpose of procession is, one must consider not only the form, but the total ritual context to which it belongs" (Graf 1996: 64).

In this brief statement, Fritz Graf addresses the main elements of "procession": spatiality, participants, mediality, and meaning. These components, to which must be added temporality, generate enough variables to underscore the fact that "procession" is an umbrella term, a portmanteau denoting multifarious events involving movement – mostly of a collective nature – and carried out with intent, such as religious journeys, festive or funerary processions, sacrificial processions, military processions, and so forth. It is also obviously through the interaction of all these elements, both with each other and with a given cultural context, that the particular character of any procession emerges. Thus, attempts to classify processions by over-emphasizing one particular aspect (time, occasion, space), however methodologically justified, are misleading since they fail to grasp the phenomenon in all its dimensions.

Seen from a cultural perspective, processions are better defined as communicative events that involve a sequential structuring of a wide variety of actions. They join the performance of these actions to their interpretation and thus create meaning. As Clifford Geertz (1973: 93) has stated, they are models *of* and models *for* constituting and validating social institutions and practices. They articulate the outcome and are instruments of interpersonal communication.

Due to their twofold character, processions serve multiple functions and produce various effects. Processions of political authorities, for example, may appear as regulatory and

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reconfirming, but may equally be used to promote transformations or impose a new political order. Funeral processions are a feature of mortuary rites, but have also been used as arenas for political and social competition. Cult processions constitute part of the festivities honoring a deity that usually culminates in a sacrifice, but at the same time provide the framework for a collective assembly of people moving along a defined route in an appropriate manner, dressed in distinct clothing and carrying ritual objects with which to perform their religious beliefs and re-create the bonds of their cultic *communitas* by sharing an exceptional experience.

The success of a procession in creating and mediating communication rests on three factors: its particular staging before an audience; its ability to reflect current (political, social or religious) circumstances; and the fact that processions, unlike other rituals, have authors (Gengnagel, Horstmann, and Schwedler 2008). All three factors underlie the flexibility, dynamics, and variability of processions, but also indicate the inherent risks that can lead to a failed performance and, thus, to a failed communication.

Processions are performative events. They are comparable to theatrical performances insofar as both stage "viewing occasions". Like performances, processions are autopoietic systems that are characterized by a continuous feedback loop operated by an ongoing interaction between performers/participants and audiences/spectators (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 38–75). It is not the co-presence of participants and spectators that creates community, but rather the interplay between actors and spectators, between them and aesthetic elements (clothing, smell, music and song, group arrangement) or the particular space to be traversed that generate instances, which, in turn, evoke the creation or collapse of communities. Thus, the transformative capacity of the procession is not only to be seen in the transfiguration of the commonplace to the conspicuous, but also in the power to provide a frame for both groups – actors and spectators – in which to experience physically and on equal terms their participation and contribution to the event.

Due to their inherently processual character, processions can be adjusted to meet various individual and collective needs and circumstances. In sources, private founders, but also civic communities as a collective are often presented as introducing new processions (e.g., Salutaris' procession in Ephesos: Wankel 1979: no. 27; Rogers 1991; Graf 2011: 110–5) or proposing transformations of already existent ones for specific reasons, such as the enhancement of a festival or for the sake of the "continuity of tradition" (e.g., *SEG* 21.469C). In this sense, processions reflect historical conditions, but they can also initiate them. Nonetheless, account must be taken of the fact that communicating a "message" through the medium of procession does not guarantee its transmission in the intended sense, since this depends on the interactions that transpire during the performance. All the same, transformations in processions, such as changes in the processional route or in participants, are rather discernible and occur relatively often in opposition to other rituals.

Processions take place in societies all over the world and in all historical periods. Yet their dynamic features, which are shaped through and by the bodily performance of their participants in a specific time and space, are culturally and historically contingent. Any analysis of processions in Greek and Roman culture draws also on evidence from different periods, places, and genres. Each of the three basic categories of evidence – literary sources, epigraphical testimony, and visual material – however, has specific limitations and problems.

Figure 26.1 Ara Pacis: Detail of the processional frieze showing the priestly college of *Quindecimviri* (North frieze). Date: 13–9 BCE. Museo dell'Ara Pacis. Photograph © Alinari Archives Florence.

The Dialectics of Processions and Space

Space plays a central role in processions. Like any kind of movement, processions take place in space, regardless of whether it is perceived consciously or not. At first glance, this statement may seem banal, but space is more than a fixed and clear-cut entity, a container, in which an event occurs. Recent contributions of social sciences and cultural studies have emphasized the relational concepts of space and have thus contributed to making this category as fundamental to social practice as that of time. According to Martina Löw (2001: 158–61), space structures action but is in itself realized through action and patterns of perception. According to this definition, space is not a fixed entity but is continually constituted and transformed through social practice (Maran 2006). The mutual relationship between space and action, between space and movement is inscribed in a built environment as well as in a landscape. As archaeological evidence and written sources reveal, there were various ways of moving in space which, in turn, produced different forms of processions.

The spatial aspect of processions was first addressed by François de Polignac (1984) with regard to the rise of the Greek polis. Using as his primary example the procession from the urban center of Argos to the Heraion, the principal sanctuary of the Argive city-state, De Polignac interpreted this movement as a symbolical way to define the territorial limits of an early polis over a territory. On the basis of three elements – the space traversed, the participants, and the goal – Fritz Graf (1995, 1996) presented an overall classificatory model that differentiates between centripetal and centrifugal processions. Whereas the first moves towards the religious and civic center of the polis, the

latter moves away from the center to the periphery. A typical centripetal procession is that of the Panathenaic *pompe*, which started at the borders of the city and led to the Acropolis through the Kerameikos, traversing the Agora by way of the Dipylon Gate. An example of a centrifugal procession is the 18-kilometer long *pompe* of the cult association of the *Molpoi* from the Delphinion, the religious-political center of Miletos, to the extra-urban oracular sanctuary of Apollo in Didyma (*LSAM* 50; Herda 2006, 2011). This type of procession, which comes very close to de Polignac's model, displays the bipolarity of center and epicenter wherein the procession serves primarily as a symbolic bond between two poles.

This twofold model introduced by Graf emphasizes the starting or the end point of a procession despite the fact that its own triad of components – space, participants, goal – generates sufficient variables to render a classification based on mere centrifugal or centripetal movement questionable. Moreover, such a classification does not take into account the dynamic character of processions, particularly with respect to the formation of space through movement. Understanding the relationship between processions and their settings not only sheds light on their meaning and function, but also allows one to trace changes and adaptations in their message.

The most famous ancient Greek procession, the Panathenaic *pompe*, is an excellent example of how a procession could be generally embedded in a city's topography and landscape. Although the description provided in many handbooks gives the impression that it was static and fixed, this view, as Julia Shear (2001) has demonstrated, is erroneous. From the introduction of the Great Panathenaia in 566/5 BCE until the festival ceased to be held in the 390s CE, alterations occurred in every aspect: in the procession as well as in the sacrifices, offerings, games, personnel, and financing. These transformations went hand-in-hand with those of the themes of the festival, which initially emphasized Athenian identity and autochthony, but later the general glory of Athenian military successes and the powerful position of the city-state. All of these themes represent variations on the main theme, namely the commemoration of the gods' victory in the Gigantomachy. These modifications were again met by constant adjustment in the procession's settings. Although the route along which cult personnel, city officials, Athenian hoplites and cavalry, and participants (Athenian citizens, metoikoi, and contingents from the city's colonists and allies) conducted the sacrificial victims, the *peplos,* and the ship-car, was already in use in the mid-sixth century, connections to shifting themes were offered by individual buildings and monuments. Thus, not only did the movement through the ritual landscape linking the Academy, the Agora, the sanctuary of Dionysos, the stadium, and the Akropolis activate Panathenaic themes, but so too did later constructions authorized by the demos, such as the panel paintings of the Stoa Poikile that depicted Athenian military triumphs, both mythological (battle of Theseus and the Athenians against Amazons) and historical (battle of Marathon), and the decorative program of the Parthenon's frieze, echo and complement modifications (Shear 2001: 713). Moreover, the embellishment of the Stoa Poikile turned the northwest corner of the Agora into one of the prime areas for the erection of war memorials (Pausanias 1.15.4; Aeschines 3.186), which, in turn, interacted with the procession by displaying in another, even more emotive way, the glory of Athenian military supremacy. This close interrelationship between architectural setting and procession can also be observed

in later periods (Shear 2001: 668, 933–45) in which it expressed the city's history, its foundation, as well as the origins of the festival with great nuance. Several strategies were employed, such as the incorporation of architectural members of earlier buildings in new projects or even the introduction of new elements. For example, although the reconstruction of the Pompeion, which had been destroyed by the Romans in 86 BCE, was carried out on a smaller scale after 135 CE, the Athenians still integrated the old propylon in the new structure and thus preserved the procession's original starting point. The monumentalization of the processional route through the construction of various porticos and columnar façades, both along the road and in the Agora, probably occurred at the same time. On the one hand, these architecturally novel and up-to-date measures provided a new setting for the Panathenaic *pompe*, thus emphasizing the still very much alive and venerable position of the city as a host for the Panathenaia as well as other important games granted to her by Hadrian. On the other hand, the colonnaded streets offered a theater-like view of the procession that matched the recently-introduced ship-car on which the *peplos* was now displayed (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.250).

A continuous adjustment of processional movements can also be observed in the *pompa circensis*. In Republican times, the *pompa circensis* began on the Capitolium and ended at the Circus Maximus, passing through the Forum Romanum, the *clivus Capitolinus*, along the Via Sacra, and finally through the *vicus Tuscus* (Dionysios Halikarnassos 7.72.1). In the imperial period, however, not only was the traditional route extended with the inclusion of new temples dedicated to deified emperors as well as other urban areas, such as the imperial Fora and Campus Martius, but its starting-point varied (Arena 2009: 86–93). The earliest extension of the traditional route occurred in Tiberian times, when the temple of Mars Ultor was incorporated in the procession. Practically speaking, this meant that the *pompa circensis* must have passed along the Forum Augusti. In the *adventus* of Nero in 59 CE (*CIL* 6.2042, l. 24–30, 34–38), the procession started at the Capitol, passed along the *clivus Capitolinus* and *clivus Argentarius* and arrived at the Forum Augusti, at which point it probably returned down Via Sacra to the Circus Maximus. The epigraphic evidence of the *Acta fratrium Arvallum* also reveals that the Capitol was not always the starting-point of the *pompa circensis*; during festivities related to the cult of Augustus, the college of the *Arvales* sacrificed in the *templum novum Divi Augusti*, from which the procession likewise seems to have started. The temple of the deified Augustus, the Forum Augusti, and the *domus Domitiana* are registered as places in which the procession had to pause for a second or even third sacrifice. All these adjustments were obviously driven by the ideological intentions of the emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, who wished to make visible to the masses the legitimacy of their power through their relationship to the *domus divina* of Augustus. Thus, through movement and pauses, different places within the sacral and political topography of the city were joined to form a unique setting.

Under the Flavians, however, this setting was changed once again in accordance with the altered ideology of imperial power. Temples explicitly associated with the Julio-Claudian dynasty were eliminated from the route, the Capitol was once again made the traditional starting-point (Scheid 1990: 178–182.), and the Campus Martius, a crucial area for the imperial cult in the second century, was added for the first time to the

processional route. According to Patrizia Arena's reconstruction of the route (2009: 91–2), which must have been considerably extended during that period, part of the procession came from the Campus Martius and entered the Forum Romanum after passing along the *clivus Argentarius* near the Imperial Fora. The transformation of the processional route clearly emphasized the continuity of a new dynasty and shaped a new visual landscape.

Centripetal processions such as the Panathenaic *pompe* and the *pompa circensis* reveal the dynamics of the dialog between the urban landscape with its buildings and monuments and social practice as performed in the processional movement. They also make it clear that a procession cannot be interpreted solely on the basis of its starting- or end-point, however symbolically significant these may be. Reference points along the route are, in fact, of equal importance to the procession's "message". This becomes especially obvious in the analysis of the centrifugal procession. Since by definition this kind of procession leads away from a center and ends at a point often located at a certain distance, the points in between become even more important. Specified as lying along the long processional route between the Delphinion in the center of Miletos and the extra-urban sanctuary in Didyma amid the Milesian *chôra*, are seven stations in which local Milesian gods and heroes were venerated with sacrifices and/or performance of paians (Herda 2006: 279–332; ca. 200 BCE). Two of these stops – the sanctuaries of the river god Kelados/Keladon and Apollo Keraites – were probably related to the cultural history of Miletos, thus indicating that the processional route with its stations activated a particular historical, political, and religious narrative.

The same can be said of the procession of the *hiera* from the political center in Athens to Eleusis. According to Pausanias' description (1.36.3–38.4), the procession followed the *Hiera Hodos* with stops at the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore outside the town, where the wandering Demeter had once been received by the Athenian representative Phytalios; the passage over the Rheitoi, whose waters were sacred to Demetra; the palace of Triptolemos, the ancestor of Krokonidai; and the grave of Eumolpos, ancestor of the hierophants (Graf 1996: 63; Patera 2011: 124–5). Thus, the procession's course unified various messages into one narrative encompassing the political and religious relationship of Athens and Eleusis and the myths surrounding Demeter. Its participants reconstructed the territorial claims of Athens over Eleusis by moving over the tracks of the wandering deity. Marked and interpreted by ritual action, a specific landscape beyond any architectural arrangement emerged.

The monthly sacrificial procession in Olympia was performed in a particularly circular way. Pausanias (5.13–5) explicitly states that it passed altars not in topographical sequence, but in the order of the rituals to be accomplished. Evidently, the pattern of ritualized movement in Olympia was not entirely preconfigured by the architectural arrangement of the monuments, but instead defined an independent spatial system that co-existed with other ritual spaces (Hölscher 2002: 336–8; Mylonopoulos 2006: 106–8).

Thus through their performance processions constitute space as well as its limits in different ways. Despite their ephemeral character and by virtue of their participants' engagement, processions not only create space, but also contribute to the perception and visual transmission of political and ritual contexts. It is through performative aesthetics that communication succeeds or fails and above all transcends the ephemeral.

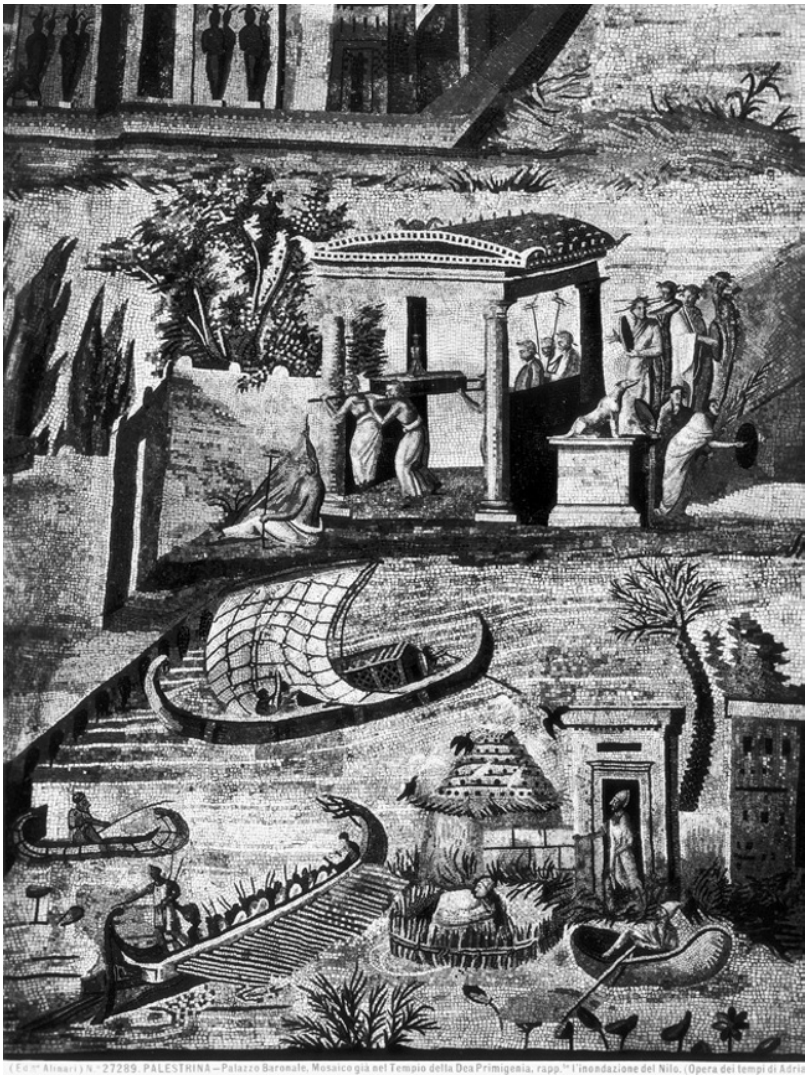

Figure 26.2 Praeneste (Palestrina): Detail of the Nile mosaic showing a procession scene. Date: first century BCE? Museo Archeologico Prenestino. Photograph © Alinari Archives Florence.

Performative Aesthetics

Processions are spectacles. As such, they are a physical and emotional experience. Examination of textual and archaeological evidence of Greek processions does indeed reveal that they were audiovisual, all-encompassing works of art. The interpretation and comprehension of processions must take into consideration the effect of the babble of voices, movement, music, colors, smells, and visual impressions. It is because sources emphasize these particular elements that scholars often believe that processions were "shows".

Yet textual sources provide evidence primarily of their sober, indeed painstaking, preparation. They lay down the occasion, the point in time, the space through which the procession will move, the actors, the atmospheric conditions, and the overall performance even though they do not always address all the elements (Connelly 2011). The care shown in providing "staging instructions" makes clear that processions were planned events aimed at evoking an intense physical and emotional experience (Kavoulaki 1999). It is precisely due to the intensity of the experience that processions become memorable, and thus a point of reference and special meaning to all participants. "The more intense the spectator's experience of the parade, the more he is psychologically implicated in its performance, the stronger the affect" (Brilliant 1999: 221) and, accordingly, the positive reception of its underlying meanings.

Hellenistic processions were legendary for their pageantry and ostentatious display of luxury and wealth. Ptolemaios Philadelphos' grand procession in Alexandria (Dunand 1981; Rice 1983) as well as Antiochos IV Epiphanes' procession in Daphne (Polybios 30.25.1–26.4 = Athenaios 5.194c–5d) are representative of such royal *tryphe*. For Athenaios (5.196–203b), who follows Kallixeinos' description of the Ptolemaios' procession, it is not the context but only the aesthetic aspect of the pompe that is of interest: "I have selected for mention only those things which contained gold and silver" (Athenaios 5.201f). In addition to precious objects, he records valuable incense, "purple tunics with gold girdles", elephants with "trappings of gold and [...] ivy-crowns in gold" around their necks, enormous gilded statues, *tableaux vivants* of various mythological scenes, exotic animals, a "gold breastplate eighteen feet in length, and another of silver, twenty-seven feet, with two gold thunderbolts on it fifteen feet long, and an oak grown of gold studded with jewels" (5.202d–e). Spectators in the stadium were certainly of the same opinion as Athenaios: "What monarchy, fellow-banqueters, has ever been so rich in gold? Surely not any that appropriated the wealth of Persia or Babylon, or that had mines to work, or that owned the Pactolus river, washing down gold-dust. No; for it is only the Nile, the river truly called 'gold-flowing'" (5.203b–c). The visual splendor of the procession displayed the power and the prestige of the king directly, and the potential of his subjects indirectly, thus making it the center of an imaginary community shared by the Macedonian conquerors and the subjugated Egyptians.

Visual splendor was also the reference point for Pompeius' third triumph in 61 BCE after the defeat of Mithridates. This meticulously staged two-day celebration "put on show at the heart of the metropolis the wonders of the East and the profits of empire" (Beard 2009: 7) in honor of Rome's and above all Pompeius' military success. The first day saw a long parade of conquered kings "not in chains but dressed up in their native costume" and "the officers, children, and generals of the kings [Pompeius] had fought" (Appian, *Mithridateios* 116), along with the placards recalling the victor's accomplishments (conquered territories, ships captured, cities founded), colossal golden statues, stupendous art objects, as well as paintings illustrating moments of the campaign. The second day was devoted to Pompeius himself, who wore a cloak that had once belonged to Alexander and rode a chariot decorated with precious stones (Appian, *Mithridateios* 116–9; Pliny, *Natural History* 7.97–8; Plutarch, *Pompeius* 45; Beard 2007: 7–18). The triumph visualized the victory through a number of interacting images that, in turn, reaffirmed the self-perception and superiority of Romans through the agency of the vic-

tor. It "did not conceal the acts of violence that had laid the foundations of victory, but rather sublimated them to the ceremonial display of martial vigor, subjugated enemies, and material wealth gained for all to see and remember" (Brilliant 1999: 222), and thus placed the triumph at the center of social memory.

The same care was needed to make a procession's message effective as to plan military strategy (Diodorus Siculus 31.8). Components such as the ordering of groups, the transport of cultic or precious objects, and the dress code for participants, all had a direct effect on the performance. Such factors were meant to create a balance between exposing and equalizing the distinctions of participants, but also to maintain the tension of actors and spectators. Inscriptions of the Hellenistic period confirm this preoccupation with the aesthetic qualities of processions.

In regulations concerning codes of conduct, the dress, crown, and sometimes even the shoes and jewelry of the participants are specified. Embedded as such elements are in the defined context of a procession, they function as bearers of purposeful visual perception, and as (temporary) markers of identity since they designate the sex as well as the religious, social, and personal status, or group affiliation of the individual. Religious and political functionaries, who normally headed the processions, as well as women and ephebes were particularly singled out. Priests wore a white or purple chiton and a crown, usually a gold one (e.g., *SEG* 26.1334; Blümel 1985: no. 4, ll. 80–1; *LSCG* 163; *LSAM* 37). Presidents of games (*agonothetai*) were also dressed distinctively in a purple chiton and crown (in the arrangements made by Iulius Demosthenes of Oenoanda for a great festival in honor of the emperor Hadrian, the president was to wear a golden crown adorned with miniature busts of the emperors (*SEG* 38.1462B, ll. 52–3, 56–7)). Ephebes and choirboys usually wore white cloaks (Jones 1999). In the procession of Andania in Messenia (*IG* 5.1.1390, ll.14–32; Deshours 2006; Gawlinski 2012) the dress code distinguished men from women, initiated from non-initiated individuals, as well as "sacred" from "independent", married from unmarried, and free from enslaved women. Wreaths were thus prescribed for initiated men and white felt caps for initiated women during the procession; wreaths with laurel for both sexes during the festival; white clothes and no shoes for the not yet initiated; opaque clothes "with stripes on their robes not more than half a finger wide" for the not yet initiated women; linen tunics with robes of different qualities for "independent" women, their daughters, and slaves; undergarments without decoration and woolen robes with stripes for "sacred" women, and opaque linen tunics for their daughters. In this sense, clothing as a form of non-verbal, visual communication was an effective instrument in the staging, whose various levels of meaning were determined by hierarchy-, gender-, and generation-specific factors as much as by religious and social circumstances. What could be worn and under what circumstances had an effect on the constitution or disintegration of groups within the procession, as well as a visual and dramaturgical impact on spectators.

The Relationship Between Staging and Perception

Participants in a procession are, without any doubt, at the center of staging instructions for they occur as both subjects and objects of any such event. They simultaneously shape and are the addressees of this shaping. Theoretically, there are two distinct circles of

participants: those who *stricto sensu* carry out the procession, in other words, the actors; and those, often neglected in research, who react to the performance of the first group, in other words, the observers, the members of the audience. Whilst the actors perform the actions – move through space, wear particular clothing, hold objects, speak or sing – the audience perceives their actions and reacts to them. Action and reaction are supposed to influence each other in such a way as to result in the formation of a community supporting the ritual event. Using the leitmotif of "order", regulations establish those distinguishing characteristics by which the group of actors is to differentiate itself from that of the observers, as well as the hierarchical order applied to those persons within the circle of actors.

Although textual evidence does not often refer to the participation or reaction of spectators, the perception and reaction of the spectators was indeed taken into consideration. The prescribed conduct at a funeral procession according to the resolution of the Delphian Labyads stipulated that: "*The dead person is to be carried in silence, enshrouded, and must not be set down at bends in the way, nor shall laments be cried outside the house, until the grave has been reached*" (Rougemont et al. 1977: no. 9, ll.31–7). It was to be carried out with as little ostentation as possible, in silence, with the corpse enshrouded, and thus borne, as it were, "in-visibly". The funeral procession thus lost one of its optical attractions. Moreover, by forbidding lamentation, the acoustic expression of the mourners' emotions was equally prevented.

Scenes of excessive and very loud mourning may not only disturb normality, but also evoke strong, i.e., uncontrollable, emotions in the audience. Whatever those participating in the funeral procession do has an effect on the audience, and whatever the audience does has an effect on those mourning. In this sense, it may be maintained that, like a theater performance, a procession in public is created and guided by a self-referential and permanently changing feedback loop. This is also why the course of a procession can never be completely and totally planned or predicted. The funeral of a certain upper-class individual in Knidos exemplifies what uncontrolled and unpredictable reactions on the part of observers could look like (Blümel 1992: no. 71; 1./2. CE). When the death of this particular woman became known, the people gathered "*with great fervour in the theatre, as her corpse was carried out*". When the procession approached the theater, "*the people took hold of the body and demanded with one voice that she should be carried to her grave with the participation of the whole people*". Here, then, a private funeral procession was interrupted by an excessive demonstration of emotions by the masses, and changed, in the end, to an affair involving everyone, actors and spectators alike (Chaniotis 2006: 224–5).

This sort of uncertainty regarding the course of events in a procession was evidently deemed a flaw, indeed a danger that had to be averted or at least minimized at all costs. Different strategies, such as limiting the number of participants or prescribing codes of conduct, were developed and tested to this end. The goal of such measures was to interrupt or control the feedback loop. Visible or audible – and thus potentially dangerous – reactions in the audience had to be suppressed or modified to "inner reactions", ones that could be felt but not openly perceived.

On the other hand, systematic strategies of staging were used not only to avoid unwanted audience reaction, but to evoke particular effects. Thus, in Magnesia-on-the-Meander people were instructed to erect altars before every house and workshop and to

paint them and even decorate them with inscriptions (Kern 1900: no. 100a and b). The day of the procession to the Altar of Homonoia in Antiocheia on Pyramos was declared a holiday for everyone (*LSAM* 81; Chaniotis 1995: 156–60); free from the burden of trade, all citizens donning festive wreaths were to gather (in an orderly way, of course) to admire the procession of the magistrates, the victorious athletes, the youth of the city and, last but not least, the sacrificial animals with their gilt horns. New modes of perception were opened up to the participants and the audience. Not the demonstrative display of order, but the visible glory, the beautiful clothing, the wreaths, the harmonious hymns – in short, the aesthetic components – were in the foreground. The audience was involved in the festive mood, its presence intended and part of the staging. No attempt was made to prevent interaction between actors and audience, or to play it down. On the contrary, clear requirements guided this interaction. The interplay of certain parameters, such as clothing, objects carried, and group formation that entailed a change in aesthetic experience, was now the central matter. Sacrificial animals had gilt horns, priests wore robes and wreaths in accordance with the festive occasion, the city's youth was organized according to age, and citizens according to tribes. All this was intended to evoke feelings of wonder and admiration in the audience. Instructions such as "*all citizens are to wear wreaths*" blurred the borders between the individual and social or political groups and simulated a community even if the circle of direct participants in the procession was delimited strongly, sometimes even in spatial terms (Köhler 1996: 147–53).

An analysis of the formation of the ephemeral, yet clearly visible, ordering of persons and groups reveals that processions are indicators of political and social ideas of order. While this order determines the hierarchic delimitation, the demarcation of groups within the whole and, particularly, the border between direct participants and audience, aesthetic elements strengthen the aspect of gradual differences, and thus contribute to the transformation of the individual parts into a whole. Processions thus unfold their full communicative potential in the interplay between actors and spectators as well as that between staging instructions and experienced performance.

Guide to Further Reading

For a general introduction to the theme of processions, see Gengnagel, Horstmann, and Schwedler (2008). On the interplay between space and social practice, see Maran (2006). For a survey of Greek and Roman processions, including bibliography as well as textual, epigraphic and iconographic sources, see True et al. (2004) and Fless (2004) respectively. On processions and performativity, see Brilliant (1999), Kavoulaki (1999), Chaniotis (2006) and Favro and Johanson (2010). The main features of Greek processions are discussed by Graf (1995 and 1996); case studies by Rice (1983) (Alexandria), Deshours (2006) and Gawlinski (2012) (Andania), Shear (2001) (Athens), Rogers (1991) (Ephesos), and Herda (2006) (Miletos). On Roman processions with further bibliography, see Beck (2005) and Hölkeskamp (2006); on the Roman triumph see besides the seminal study of Brilliant (1999), the recent studies of Itgenshorst (2005), Beard (2007), Pelikan Pittenger (2008), and Östenberg (2009); on the *pompa circensis*, see Arena (2009).

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CHAPTER 27

Urbanization and Memory

Christopher Smith

Introduction

Religion, like many human experiences, may be epiphanic or it may be cumulative. Instant conversion experiences, such as that of St Paul, are attested and observable today. For the most part however, religious behavior is the steady sedimentary laying down of habits and experiences over long periods of practice, a habitus, a recursively reinforcing set of practices and actions which derive from an external logic and construct the framework for internal experience. Prayer, ritual, and observation, and the social interactions which accompany them, derive meaning from repetition and grant meaning to recurrent action. Perfunctory religious action is less perfunctory because it is repeated and often in company with others. Whether one believes that the communication inherent in religious action is to one's gods or to one's peers, there is a dialogue of sorts in which one action predisposes one to repetition, unless or until for some reason of desuetude or despair, the dialogue falls finally and irreparably silent.

Religion without personal and collective remembering is impossible, and perhaps even more so in religions without the book. The very concept of ritualization requires repetition, and at least the assumption of an accurate repetition. Rituals that operate within a religious framework suppose a narrative of sorts, whether that be an individual event which is recalled, or a recurrent seasonal element. Religion is seldom ahistorical; and there must always be some strong or weak authorizing discourse to offer the grounds of a shared experience. At the least, the sense of a shared notion of the divine is a basis for one conceptualization of identity.

Both at an individual and at a communal level, the relevance of repetition, and the importance of the balance between deep structure and innovation, mean that memory is of central significance. The recent wave of studies on memory in the ancient world have been helpful in drawing attention to the way in which the ancients experienced and used

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memory (and forgetting) and in bringing to bear the substantial theoretical literature which has grown up on the subject. Within that discourse it seems important to recognize the role of the city.

This is not without historiographical significance. Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) work on collective memory was strongly driven by the notion of the city. The sense that memory is a product of community, that it is constructed and sustained by social interaction and communication, is now a very important element of the way that we argue about how we remember. Theoretically, this is very relevant to religion which, certainly in antiquity, was scarcely ever a private hidden act but rather existed in the spaces outside temples, in front of altars and along the streets.

Jan and Aleida Assmann added to this communicative memory the notion of cultural memory within which tradition is the vehicle or medium (see briefly Assmann 2010). They argue that the three-generation communicative memory, the sense that beyond three generations the capacity to recall fades quickly, is a kind of synchronic memory, with tradition providing the diachronic element. Overlaying this notion, of course, are a mass of further points of view and elucidations. Pierre Nora's enormous exploration of the notion of *lieux de memoire* (1984–92) has been of substantial significance for ancient historians, but it has both critics and limitations. Created at a particular point in time and increasingly driven towards a problematization of the sense of the French nation, Nora's work, like much work on the notion of memory, has become entwined in a discourse about the production of modernity in the nineteenth century, and the idea that in some sense, as a result of specific historical events and processes (somewhat banally the First World War, but also the development through the nineteenth century of a densely packed and experienced urban lifestyle), and of specific technological changes (photography, entailing new notions of reproduction and repetition, and architecture), this was a moment of change. This raises a number of questions about the extent to which we can simply apply these models to an earlier time, questions to some extent avoided (rather than answered) by the adoption of cultural memory. At the same time, Paul Ricoeur's immense account of the interplay between memory, history and forgetting (2004) not only worried at the Halbwachsian model but also insisted on the practice of history itself within the generation of memory. This is of importance not least because it refocuses attention on memory as a place of contest and sophisticated invention. In terms of religion, we might come back to the notion of the highly innovative practices of the ancient world which are sometimes masked in discourses of tradition.

Assmann (2010) used Levi-Strauss' idea of the hot and cold society and memory in his work; hot societies use memory as a driving force for change; cold societies use memory to confirm the power structures. Cold societies are primitive; hot societies are civilized. Assmann thought that societies could contain something of both, which is surely correct, insofar as the spectrum actually holds value. If we follow this line it is legitimate at least to work with concepts of the operation of memory, even though there are problems surrounding the applicability to antiquity of models which were intended to meet the challenges of experience and authenticity in a rapidly transforming modern world. The city has a special role in those models and this chapter will take some key themes as ways of illustrating where an archaeology of religion might find helpful indications of the same sort of density of communicative and cultural memories operating in antiquity. My case study throughout is Republican Rome. My aim, however, is to be somewhat critical, and

to point as much to limitations as to positive statements. If we wish to apply memory studies to this area we must acknowledge both the limits of the evidence and the limits of the model.

Architecture and Religion: Into History

The introduction of monumental construction in stone is often taken as one of the prime characteristics of the move towards urban form. Walls, houses and temples are the key monuments, and throughout the Mediterranean, archaeologists find this trio of markers often appearing within a relatively short time frame. The capacity to command resources to construct edifices that appear to represent either communal self-awareness or levels of social hierarchy which are sustainable within communal structures may be regarded as indicative of a step forward towards what is presented as a city-state.

Whether this teleology of settlement is valuable or not is another question. There is no moment at which Rome becomes a city; there is only process, and the process of monumentalization can also be seen in sites which are not recognizably urban – the newly-recovered site of Fanum Voltumnae (if it is indeed the sanctuary site) is not, it seems to me, urban but it is monumental. However, across central Italy, the stone-built temple is a common phenomenon of the sixth century.

The construction of a temple in stone was a decision of some moment. It is interesting to reflect, therefore, on where we find temples. Some of the most significant early middle-Italian temples are on highly liminal sites; the sites of S. Omobono, Gravisca and Pyrgi. Even if we separate this from a discourse on urbanization, we can regard the move from huts which seem to have been difficult to distinguish as either religious or domestic but rather to have occupied a position in between, to the more specific architecture of religion, as a moment of rupture and innovation. The first temple at S. Omobono, erected in the sixth century, frequently awash and right on the edge of habitable Rome by the Tiber, is a marker as much to those who enter the city as it is to those who live in Rome, and like the other port temples may have been primarily intended as a highly-visible marker of the presence of a deity who encouraged and safeguarded fair trade and neutrality within a market embedded in archaic Italic social practices.

These temple constructions brought with them the opportunity for levels of decoration which are harder to envisage on the preceding huts (see also Chapter 24). We have no direct evidence, of course, and can only work from the representations of huts in hut urns, but there most of the decoration is geometric, and little is figurative although there are some exceptions. Architectural decoration in terms of friezes and pedimental sculpture offers opportunities for narrative, and the embodiment of specific iconographical representations which are themselves encapsulations of narrative. Temples permitted stories to be told.

The fact that these stories were visible in the architectural terracottas on both sacred and domestic architecture (see Winter, Iliopoulos, and Ammerman 2009) is a reminder of the narrowness of the gap between priestly and political office. If we are right in our reconstruction of the Roman kingship, the king's role as priest and as ruler is separated some time in the sixth century with the creation of the *rex sacrorum* and the complication of the architecture around the area of the so-called Regia and Domus Publica.

Both kinds of leadership however can share some of the narrative that was based on the orientalizing influences which abounded. We are now beginning to get a much clearer picture of a generalized production of architectural terracotta which could function both in temple and house contexts, and so separation of functions and communality of iconography to an extent balanced each other.

For a highly experiential view of religion, one might say much about the role of the temple, the strangeness of this new, imposing, grand, angular, colorful architecture, and its impact on those who were participating in sacrifices and festivals around the temple. Vedia Izzet, for example, has done good work on inside–outside dichotomies in tombs and temples (2007). There are some other major issues, however, that relate more narrowly to memory. The opportunity given by narrative is that it allows myth to be – perhaps for the first time – explicitly and significantly visible within the context of the built architectural environment. The settlements of sixth century BCE Italy were now billboards for a highly narrative and chronologically complex set of religious ideas.

First, narrative. The Pyrgi frieze with the story of Tydeus and the broader context of the Seven against Thebes is now well known. Along with the abundant evidence of imported pottery, we can safely assume that the central Italians could understand their deities as engaged both with each other and with mortals, and exemplifying themes of heroism and villainy. So religion is implicated (however lightly) in narratives of exemplarity.

Second, time. Denis Feeney (2007) has shown that we must not overstate the case for chronological knowledge and sophistication, but the introduction of Greek paradigms into Italy does also imply some sense of time, even if that is no more than far, middle and ecent time. The gods are present at different levels of time, mythical and current, and conduct the values of the one to the other. The repeated representations of Herakles and Minerva in contexts of temple building cannot be simplistically interpreted, but it is hard not to see some sort of reference to the capacity of virtue to be rewarded. An example from myth-history sustained its relevance to the contemporary period.

The creation of monumental architecture encouraged and responded to a desire for representation. It also permitted one of many potential chronological markers, as Nicholas Purcell argued in his essay on the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol (2003). The temple's dedication was associated with both the foundation of the Republic and the commencement of Republican time. The nail which was solemnly and annually knocked into the temple gave the momentum to a sense of the temple as a real *monumentum*, a reminder, a repository of sequence. Capitoline time, then, may even have preceded the foundation era *(ab urbe condita/AUC)* time. Roman temples then instantiated concepts of both mythical and historical time. The development of the monumental temple was a contribution to the development of Roman memory, and memory within a broader theological framework. The gods, who had been present in the past, were also present now.

Memory and Religion: The Calendar

The Roman calendar gave a shape to Roman experience of religion (Rüpke 2011). Roman time in the archaic and early Republican period was highly controlled and managed. The beginning and middle of the month were proclaimed by the *rex sacrorum*;

intercalation was managed by the *pontifex maximus.* Only later in the Republic was the calendar published rather than announced. This was a very clear indication of the limitations of individual memory in regard to the festival year. The proliferation of published calendars would expand access but there were continuing efforts to ensure that there was a sense that time needed to be interpreted and it could be harnessed for propaganda purposes; the interest in anniversaries and five- or ten-year cycles which Augustus seems to have had is one example.

The calendar was not a randomly-generated list. We can see that the calendar contained within it complex relationships and intertexts. It has become common now to read the calendar as a highly sophisticated document, and Ovid's *Fasti* shows that this is a not unreasonable approach. The calendar also makes reference to history, however; the references to the Regifugium and Poplifugium seem inevitably to make some kind of reference to events which are being commemorated.

The calendar also maintains a clear sense of the evolution of Rome. The highly agricultural elements of the calendar relate to a Rome which faded increasingly from view. The plough marks in the Forum under the Domus Publica (Ampolo 2013: 251–2) and the natural comparison between Rome and other settlements such as Veii where a lot of the space between habitations must have been cultivated, are signs that Rome was once highly agricultural, and that the urban infill pushed agriculture further to the outskirts of the city.

The calendar, then, has the potential to be one of the great instruments of Roman memory, and what remains problematic is precisely how people experienced the Roman ritual year. The Christian liturgical calendar is meant to be experienced as a series of highs and lows; it has a shape which is repeatedly experienced so that each sequence of Advent to Christmas, Lent to Easter, Easter to Pentecost tells the story of Christ as well as the story of the Church. The Roman calendar is not so clearly demarcated. Yet it retained sufficient capacity for rethinking that one can see at some stage the shift from a ten-month calendar with a dead space over winter to a full twelve-month calendar, and explicit declarations of beginning and closing the year.

It is perhaps unlikely that all the Roman citizenry experienced all the Roman festivals directly, but there were some festivals such as the Fordicidia and Fornacalia which were intended to be gatherings of the community – or at least one version of it. The Fornacalia and Qurinalia seem to have been organized by *curiae*, the oldest division of the city, and one or other included within it the Feriae Stultorum, which was for those who could not remember their *curia* (Robinson 2003).

This very explicit reference to memory in the context of the religious commemoration of political community is an apparent example of the use of the calendar to reinforce political messages, but one has to be careful. Not only are there variant traditions at work, but we see this through the highly sophisticated reading by Ovid (*Fasti* 2.475–82). It was open to Romans to read the Feriae Stultorum as a convincing endorsement of their own superiority by virtue of their belonging to a specific community, and their capacity to remember. Even the provision for those who could not remember says something about memory. Yet we are still far away from a capacity to do more than imagine the role of collective memory within the experience of the calendrical year.

One might rephrase this to say that the calendar offers us good evidence for cultural memory in preserving individual festivals, but weak evidence for collective memory

across festival time. This is bound up with the impossible questions of how many people participated in festivals and how they experienced the festival at any given time. One view would emphasize the capacity of a polytheistic and polyvalent ritual cycle to be experienced differently, and recalled divergently, according to one's position and status and moment in one's life. Festivals with a strong reference to fertility presumably felt differently if one were unmarried, about to be married, or old; childless or pregnant; male or female. However similar the mechanisms of sacrifice, the compulsion to attend, the emotional valence of a festival, and how it was subsequently recalled, surely differed during life and between individuals. This is not meant to reduce Roman religion to a contentless bricolage; but it is meant to emphasize that even though we cannot recover the individual experience of a particular festival by a particular person on a particular day, and must therefore concentrate on what we know about the festival itself, those experiences existed at the time. That seems trite and banal, but it has an impact on our representation of the calendar. It was a civic product, but also a personal experience. On the festival of the Sementivae, Varro's friends are invited to the temple of Tellus by the sacristan. Varro finds his father-in-law and two friends looking at a map of Italy, and they sit down and talk about agriculture until they discover that the sacristan has been accidentally murdered. This invented situation represents the muddle between a civic festival, whose date is fixed by the *pontifices*, and the contingencies of life, yet was recalled (or represented as being recalled) in a specific way by Varro (*Res Rusticae* 1.2).

The calendar also had the capacity to be exported. Our fragmentary Fasti show that urban settlements all attained a substantial density of ritual behavior, focused on key shared festivals. Verulae (near Frosinone) put up a calendar between 14 and 42 CE celebrating various Augustan moments (the day he married Livia, for instance, at the command of the senate), but also the Lupercalia, Terminalia, Regifugium and Equirria. Some sense of a shared memory across space, then, operated through the calendar, and that perhaps bound together the world of cities in Augustan Italy.

Festivals and the City: City as Religious Spectacle

Festivals were neither vague nor open to infinite interpretation. The triumph, for example, regardless of the ways in which it may have changed from one instance to another, was fairly straightforward in meaning. Sacrifice was relatively unchanging (see Scheid 2005). Processions were visible and clear markers of significant routes, and seem to have had reasonably fixed courses (for the triumph, see Beard 2007).

Roman religion used the city; it occupied it and permeated it. From the definition of a liminal harbor at the Forum Boarium to the commanding presence of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Capitolinus, the sixth-century temples already began to delineate a city with ritual as well as physical components. The old *pomerium* (the ritual border of the city), the gates, the sense of enclosures within enclosures, the layers of religious history, the new foundations worked collectively in some sense. Varro's topographical descriptions of the city in *de lingua latina* show many generations of monument placed side by side.

In a non-urban setting, it is possible for landscape to play a huge role in the experience of a site, but in a city the size and complexity of Rome buildings may also have played a role in some sort of narration of the past. Some buildings are precisely and specifically

related to events. The booty temples of the Largo Argentina are a good example. Vowed in battle, they are the product and the representation of a specific moment in Roman history, just as victory monuments like the Column of Duilius (*LTUR* s.v. Columna Rostrata C. Duilii; Pliny, *Natural history* 34.11.20; *CIL* VI 1300 = I^2 25 = *ILS* 65) or the statue bases dedicated in the Forum Boarium after the destruction of Volsinii (Coarelli 1989: 213–4) The number of monuments and relics associated with war and victory was substantial – we hear of the accumulation of *fornices*, for instance, in the 190s (Livy 33.27.4; 37.3.7).

So the city can be constructed as a place of religious spectacle and a historical record. The place where Romulus and Remus were washed ashore, from which Tarpeia was thrown, where a battle vow was made, were visible and concrete, known and potentially narrated. How well were they narrated though? And by whom? It is tempting to assume this knowledge existed and was highly protected from deformation over time. Topographers would not be able to do their work if there were not fairly clear indicators of what was where. Our incapacity to locate the temple of Jupiter Stator is the result of the absence of a map rather than the ignorance of the sources. The distinction, however, between a knowledgeable experience of the city and one which was generalized as magnificent backdrop is substantial.

The Forum Romanum is the obvious place to look for the history of Rome constructed as part of a religious narrative which reinforces through memory key messages about Rome and the gods, and large ceremonial centers (*agorai* or *fora*) clearly did serve this function in antiquity. They collect and preserve layers of historical significance. The friezes from the Basilica Aemilia which seem to show a sequence of events from early Roman history, carved probably in the Augustan period, are a neat illustration of the location within the center of Rome of a depiction of Roman history (Lipps 2013).

However, we must again be cautious. The Basilica Aemilia is not a religious building. It was not a *templum*, and it could not host a senate meeting. It is also constructed in the first century BCE and the frieze may be an Augustan intervention. The difficulty of the Augustan intervention throughout the city is that it is so pervasive; it was therefore not representative.

Moreover, the precise historical reference may have been obscured by time. We know of statues of Alcibiades and Pythagoras in the Comitium (Pliny, *Natural History* 34.26), but their significance has been much disputed, and whatever it may have had at the time they were established there, in the context of the Social War, it cannot be guaranteed that it survived, or was recognized by all. That these two figures were identified at that time as the bravest and wisest of the Greeks, as Pliny himself noted, suggests a Roman take on Greek history which might have surprised the Greeks. The interpenetration of memory and history – in the sense outlined above (and in this formation borrowed from M. Christine Boyer 1994) of history as constructed or recomposed artifice and memory as a lived and moving expression – is evident here.

Two obvious loci for more oblique and therefore perhaps more representative indications of the operation of memory and religion in the city are the temple of Hercules Musarum and the temple of Concordia. The first was constructed by M. Fulvius Nobilior in the 180s BCE after his capture of Ambracia and it was said to have contained an earlier shrine of the Camenae which dated to the regal period, as well as a set of Fasti. Thus the building recalled an event, constructed a link back to the distant past, and embodied

some notion of the passing of time, and brought all together in a festival on 30 June (Feeney 2007). The temple of Concordia was allegedly vowed by Camillus, and rebuilt after the death of Gaius Gracchus. The temple thereby conjoins two substantial moments of disharmony and civil unrest (Curti 2000).

Neither, of course, is straightforward. There is a temptation to over-interpret M. Fulvius Nobilior's activities because it appears to be such a strong example, but the pre-existence of a regal shrine to the Camenae is at best speculative. As for Concordia, although it would make sense from one point of view to have a temple which imitated the Greek Homonoia in the fourth century, the connection with Camillus is suspect, and may be reading back from the later second century BCE. Secondly, we know that the vow of the temple was found offensive by those on the Gracchan side of the controversy, for whom Concordia must have looked like defeat. The temple, then, was perhaps overplayed as a plea for civil agreement.

This takes us back to authorizing discourses. No-one could be forced to believe that the temple of Concordia represented other than the victory of the forces of reaction. Over time, however, it may have been re-used and re-considered as a genuine claim to bring together the state, and it was frequently used for senate meetings. So a tradition could be constructed both of the unpopularity and the value of the temple, both at the same time, from different points of view.

Even in the grandest monuments of state religion, therefore, where the grandest statements could be made, and which gave the sort of backdrop to civic action which Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp (e.g., 2010: 53–75; see also Flaig 2003) and others have described, awkward dissonances could be discerned. Rome preserved (and discarded) too much of its history to be a straightforward spectacle. Some monuments, the temple of Ceres, Liber and Libera, were perhaps too bound to a specific moment and ideology to lose that connection; this was the temple created by the plebs to counter the Capitoline triad and which had connections with the preservation of records. Others, perhaps, were more fluid in meaning. Nor should we forget that by the time of Augustus, many temples were, it was claimed, in desperate need of refurbishment.

Priests and the City: Religion and Action

The priestly colleges of Rome were both visible embodiments of tradition and also actual carriers of knowledge. Their written records, relatively unchanging prayers, calendars and traditions look like the best option so far for a deep connection between memory and history. Even the very practice and discipline of history can be taken to be connected with the *pontifices*; their whitened board outside the Regia was, allegedly, the beginnings of a written annual record.

With their sometimes improbable costumes, dances and lore, the religious personnel of Rome are in a sense the way we envisage Roman conservatism to have worked, and yet even here there are problems. First, not all the colleges are of equal antiquity – they themselves in fact hint at a sequence of change and addition. Second, some of what was remembered was inexplicable, and some was perhaps invented tradition. Third, much of what the priests had to do was interpretation; in other words, they coupled legal practices with scrappy knowledge to build arguments and precedents. The Romans

told a story about an initial kit of knowledge from the regal period, but the truth was more constructed.

All this can be incorporated within a sense of memory and memorialization, but the larger question is how the people accessed or met this knowledge. Again, the priesthoods look to be strong contenders for transmitting cultural memory within their own cadre; how did they communicate beyond that? On the one hand, one might argue that repetitive action which was at least implicitly claimed to be preservative of community and tradition may have been readily understood by anyone, and then challenges to such behavior could be seen clearly as challenges. Both the Bacchanalian conspiracy and the odd episode over the books of Numa (Gruen 1990: 34–78) are – at least subsequently – constructed as challenges to authority.

One must suppose the adoption of the role of priest sacrificer by the emperor Augustus was part of a claim about authority and tradition, and highlights by concealment the paradox that the priestly colleges must have actually been continual engines of change. Their reinterpretation of tradition, through responses to specific interpretative demands and by the flexible adoption of new ideas, was part of what kept Roman religion on the move.

There is little evidence that any of this intelligence was widely shared and some of it may have been highly instinctive. Over time, the relatively tiny numbers of *pontifices*, *augures*, *quindecimviri* and *septemviri*, were joined by the more exotic Syrian and Egyptian priests; and all would eventually be swept away by a new Christian hierarchy. For the Republican period, however, the priests may have embodied memory and represented memory; it is not clear they communicated it.

Micro-Memories

At this point we should perhaps consider the role of the micro-units of the city, the *vici* and *compita*, the wayside, crossroad and parish boundaries which were associated with ritual and demarcated by shrines and altars (Lott 2004). The significance of the cult of the Lares is not to be underestimated in the context of the sense of the antiquity of Rome, and its use by freedmen, for instance, within the context of the Augustan ideology and political structure is well-studied, but the specific connotations of this memory game are not so clear perhaps. There is at least the possibility that historical references simply served to give an aura of sanctity or authority, and it is even possible that the reason for the ubiquity of the Romulus and Remus myth, for instance, was that it acted as a sort of mark of the genuine nature of the item so adorned. The family histories inscribed on the city may have been various, but they culminate in only a single official version.

That said, the city was surrounded by thousands of family histories and memories. The extra-urban burial grounds were the visible sign of the populations of the past. Again, one turns inevitably to the large disjunction between élite and non-élite. The Tomb of the Scipios united the family and its achievements. Together with the indications of literary patronage (the statue of Ennius), and the privileged position just outside the city, this like other grand tomb complexes form part of the complex circle of ritualized memorialization, from genealogies painted on walls in houses, along with the family cult of the Lares, to the procession of the busts of the ancestors in funerals, and the laudation of the deceased, to the conspicuous burial outside the city gates. The journey of the deceased,

from living with the ancestors to becoming one of them, reinforced the memorialization of a fragment of the national history.

In the face of death and its negation of permanence, in some instances the Romans constructed rituals of preservation and memory, and whilst it is not impossible to imagine these in a rural context, they were given much greater weight and consequence by being related to the rituals of political and military action in supporting the continuance of the city. Similarly, the persisting ritualization of place within the framework of associations, some explicitly connected with structures of authority, may have drawn on the past as a resource for their own sense of legitimacy. The *curiae veteres,* the "old meeting places of the city", which Dionysius of Halicarnassus saw using wooden vessels as in the old days, the maintenance of the so-called hut of Romulus, the stations of the processional route of the *Argeorum sacraria* and so on may have nothing stronger than a fictive antiquity, but it was as important as it was for the freedman P. Aelius Syneros and his sons at Ostia to depict Romulus and Remus on an altar to the deity Silvanus in the time of Hadrian. The density of association is what permits us to assume a greater level of significance in each act. However, some of the same theories of memory which have encouraged us to emphasize this as a critical theoretical tool responded to the overburden of information and visual signals in the nineteenth-century city by arguing for a diminution of memory in place of history, a memory crisis, and a concomitant enshrining of witness and judgment in authority and hierarchy.

The Changing City: Preservation and Destruction

Where urbanscape and priesthood may have joined in memory making is in issues of preservation and destruction. The classic *locus* is the Lapis Niger. The site of an altar, column and inscription, allegedly a burial place of someone very early in Roman history (some claimed Hostus Hostilius), the site gradually sank beneath the level of the Roman pavement until between Sulla and Caesar it was covered over and marked by a black stone.

This is an interesting example of the memorialization of a key spot, and can be taken as emblematic, but it is also unusual. When the podium of the temple of Mater Magna was built it obliterated previous huts – the very ones we now see claimed as the hut of Romulus. Burial places could be covered over (for instance in the Forum); temples could be decommissioned and begun again (as at S. Omobono where the archaic single temple is replaced by two temples); conversely, buildings could be fossilized in their original plan (the Regia or the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, always said to be renewed on its original scale).

Many of the relevant choices and actions will have necessarily required priestly intervention. Far from being the static backdrop to unchanging religious activity, Rome was under constant reinvention. The processes of vowing and constructing temples which was the concomitant of military success led to repeated interventions in the city, all requiring some degree of priestly agreement. The complexities are well set out in the dispute over Clodius' temple of Liberty on the site of Cicero's house, and its subsequent demolition in mid-first century BCE.

The urge to protect was not universal. Another tendency was to tidy. The Forum could become cluttered. Areas needed to be cleaned – once a year the Vestals house had

to be cleaned out. The white boards at the Regia, listing the most important events of the current year, were cleaned each year. A process of selection was necessary and the city was thus constructed by what was kept and what was not. Very specific historical memories may have helped to preserve some monuments, but other memories were highly constructed. The house of Romulus was thought to have survived and was preserved; yet the stories that surrounded it were likely developed in the Republic. So the hut of Romulus is invented several times over; an artificial memory, a *lieu de memoire* which played a part in a particular national myth.

We should not turn the ancient city into a kind of attic from which nothing was ever lost. The refurbishments of temples such as the interventions in the Largo Argentina were not meant to destroy but they were meant to update. Many parts of the city were buried or covered over, and not all with the decency of the Lapis Niger (which was itself probably covered over by the second century CE). The fact of Augustus' necessary renewals and the suggestions in the sources that there were festivals, such as the Robigalia in Ovid's account, which hardly anyone attended, show that memory can only hold onto the past for so long. As the hold of memory in lived experience weakens, history takes over.

Conclusion

This highly general account of the role of memory in the practice of religion in the city of Rome has had modest ambitions. Starting from the theoretical discussion of memory which has become such a key feature of many recent works, I have tried to find evidence for either collective or cultural memory. The evidence exists, and the phenomenon of communication and tradition sustaining and preserving information in the context of urban religion also existed. The malleability of tradition, however, is such that we cannot mistake memory for stability of practice. Moreover, most of what we have seen has been high end, élite practice and some of it not much shared outside the tiny number of priests.

The kinds of sedimentary processes of religious behavior which I began with are complicated at Rome by the multitude of options, and this increases over time. By the first century BCE, Romans are faced with the worshippers of Attis who castrate themselves in memory of their god. What the Romans remembered, and what they remembered in the specific context of the city, was highly flexible.

Are modern interpretative models of memory helpful for the ancient world? This seems to be the largest challenge. Granted that memory was constructed collectively and communally, what are the sorts of memories which the Romans had? A recent study of Cicero's use of historical anecdotes suggests that he could rely on his (educated) audience to have a basic grasp on the regal period and its most significant moments, and a few key historical exempla, to which he would regularly return (Bücher 2006). These perhaps are the *lieux de memoire*; key moments, in their broadest and vaguest sense, which are relatively tightly tied to the national myth.

Some memories were perhaps less polyvalent; the Regia would be an example of a building which seems to have been increasingly tied to some specific function, defined perhaps in the sixth century BCE (see the reconstructions of Carandini 2012: tav. 2, 3, 5, and 6, which remain at various levels problematic). Yet so much of what we see both in the theory and in the evidence is from the highest end of cultured, literate society.

This is not to say that Rome was a primitive cold society; it clearly was not, for history was malleable and memories were constructed in ways which encouraged change and development; even the use of memory in the Augustan age to try to indicate the absence of change or the return to tradition was highly innovative. Moreover, cities were dense and rich with meaning; and history was constructed and repeated through monuments; the double meaning of *monumenta* as physical object and tradition is telling.

Yet the obsession with memory, the concern with the recovery, authenticity, loss and reinvention of the past which inspired theorists from Halbwachs on, should not be automatically inferred for all periods of antiquity. It responded to a singular moment in the early twentieth century and perhaps we see a heightened emphasis in the late Republic at a time of similar uncertainty. The cultural revolution may have inspired a desire to preserve or to rediscover (just as we may currently feel that the pace of change threatens authenticity of experience). Our recurrent memory crises, as Christine Boyer (1994) put it, reflect moments where a perceived normal relationship between the present and the past seems at risk.

For the most part the persistence of the *sacra*, the presence and visibility of the priests, the city as spectacle may have been sufficiently reassuring, although the rise of individual votive offerings and the persistence of mystery and ecstatic cults suggests a need for something more. Collective memory may better be sought amongst the recursivity of repeated sacrifice or the sense of how things should be done that could lead to the repetition of festivals, or the desire to memorialize achievements through a temple foundation. Cultural memory relates better to the deeper stories of foundation and redemption, from Romulus to Camillus. Neither determines any lack of change, and we should not assume that either operated at a high degree of specificity, except for the élite. Yet in the tortured revolution from Republic to empire, which was also a point of transformation for what it was to be a Roman, the interruptions and challenges to shared memory in a city which was being transformedmay have made memory more important and contested. Within the context of the religion of the city, as seen in archaeology, the instrumentalization of religion can be seen in the Augustan fascination with origins and the deep past, but this may only be a part of the story. Further use of memory as an explanatory or heuristic tool in ancient history needs to remain fully alive to its theoretical ambivalence, and temporal instability, which makes it a useful way of emphasizing the potential for change even in allegedly changeless rituals, and a challenge to locate the creation and preservation (or loss) of memory in specific urban and social constructions.

Guide to Further Reading

On memory, see the valuable accounts of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century contexts of memory theory in Matsuda (1996) and Boyer (1994). Standard works are Halbwachs (1992); Assmann (2010); Nora (1984–92); Ricoeur (2004); for applications to urban religion see Bommas, Harrisson, and Roy (2012). For the development of urban architecture, see Cifani (2008); for doubts over the utility of "urbanization" as a model, see Horden and Purcell (2000). For the Regia, see the reconstructions of Carandini (2012: 2. Tav. 2, 3, 5, and 6), which remain at various levels problematic; for terracotta production, see Winter, Iliopoulos, and Ammerman (2009). On temples in

general see Izzet (2007); and on the temple of Capitoline Jupiter see Purcell (2003). – For the calendar see Rüpke (2011); Feeney (2007). On the Fordicidia and Fornacalia see Robinson (2003). Festivals: for the triumph see Beard (2007); for sacrifice, Scheid (2005). The best treatment of the basilica Aemilia is now Lipps (2013). On Fulvius Nobilior and Hercules Musarum, see Feeney (2007), and on Concordia Curti (2000). For vici and compita, see Lott (2004).

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PART VII

Expressiveness

CHAPTER 28

Images

Sylvia Estienne

Cultic Images: Ancient Discourse and Modern Notions

The question of images – that is, of material representation of the divine – may seem a criterion for the definition of religious identities in the ancient Mediterranean world. Although the category of "idolatry" applied by Christians is clearly polemical, that of aniconism, the absence of images in cult, is not less so. From the biblical interdiction to the Christian critics of "idolatry", the Ancients themselves inscribed their reflections on divine images in an identity discourse. As a result, the absence of figurative images is used to characterize an exclusive religious identity, like that of ancient Israel, or the otherness of barbarians, like the otherness of Persians when seen by Greeks (Herodotus 1.131) or of Germans when seen by Romans (Tacitus, *Germania* 9). It also characterizes, according to philosophical conceptions echoing in the writings of Varro or Pausanias, the primitive forms of traditional cults. According to the former, the Romans have honored gods in the absence of any image for more than one hundred and seventy years (*Divine Antiquities* fr. 18 Cardauns: *deos sine simulacro coluisse*), while for the latter, Greeks would have worshipped gods represented first in the form of "rough stones" (Pausanias 7.22.4: *argoi lithoi*).

The analysis of archaeological remains leaves no choice but to deny any historical value to these interpretative schemes, which, however, strongly influenced our modern perceptions. Indeed, it is by largely basing himself on Pausanias and ancient textual sources that Winckelmann elaborated the evolutionary model of his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764), the classification of which today still inspires the history of Greek sculpture. Recent debates on the origins of Jewish aniconism also showed how strongly representations conveyed by the biblical text stand against a necessary re-reading demanded by the advances in archeology and the questioning of the Old Testament chronology. The cultic opposition constructed by the Decalogue between Israel and the

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other peoples of the Levant, especially through the prohibition of making images of God, is an ideological construct that reflects less the singularity of Jewish religion with regard to neighboring polytheistic systems than the strong internal tensions derived from the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE. Many scholars have now abandoned the idea of an original Judaic monotheism and agree to consider it a late and progressive development; however, the questioning of the primitive aniconism of the Yahweh cult is based on archaeological and textual clues the interpretation of which is a matter of controversy, even if some scholars tend to favor a figurative worship of this national god in ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

This approach does not imply to cast aside the testimony of ancient textual sources and rely on archaeological evidence only. On the contrary, recent works on aniconism in the Greek world show that thinking this phenomenon as a cultural construction supposes reviewing the whole spectrum of divine iconography (Gaifman 2012). In a culture that favors an anthropomorphic vision of gods, the simultaneous use of non-figurative forms (rough stones, pillars, stelae) makes it possible to experiment with all the resources of visual language for expressing the ineffable otherness of the divine. The motif of the "litholatry" (veneration of stones) associated during the Roman period with the figure of the pious human being could then be diverted to mock the superstitious behavior (Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.5). Nevertheless, many "aniconic" objects taken into account in these studies belong to a hybrid genre, whether they are semi-figurative (Hermaic pillars, for example) or symbolic (empty throne). In a different cultural context, like nascent Judaism, where more controversial identity processes are engaged, does our approach to aniconism remain unchanged? Beyond Judaism, it is the systems of representation of the divine in the whole ancient Near East that should be reconsidered.

What Images of the Gods?

Historians of religion, art historians and archaeologists constantly redefine the notions they rely on when studying images from perspectives, which of course are necessarily diverse. Their approaches may be complementary. For example, typologies drawn up by archaeologists and iconographic derivations pointed out by art historians may help historians of religion reconstruct the process of standardization and formation of "canons" of the divine representation, which are necessary for the understanding of polytheistic representations. As emphasized by the pontiff Cotta in Cicero's dialogue *On the Nature of Gods* (1.81), a god's representation is determined by human conventions: it is due to the features provided by painters and sculptors that every Roman knows (and recognizes) Jupiter, Juno, Minerva and all the other gods. Being conventional, these representations are of relative nature and vary from one culture to another. But first one must determine the wide spectrum of possible images, reviewing the data, especially the iconographic ones, reveals the complexity of the processes involved and interpretation problems hence encountered.

A votive relief of Greek or Hellenistic origin, dated in the second century BCE and displayed in the Museo Lapidario Maffeiano in Verona, Italy, provides a good example (Figure 28.1). A Greek inscription identifies the dedicant as Argenidas, son of Aristogenidas,

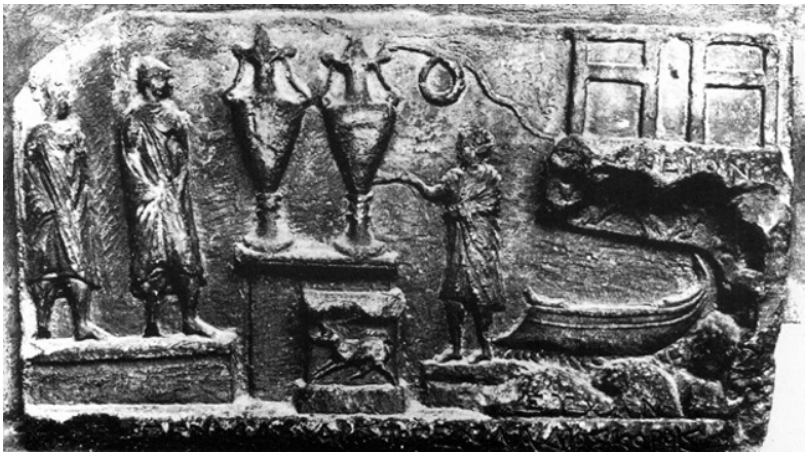

Figure 28.1 Relief of Argenidas. Museo Lapidario Maffeiano, Verona. Photo courtesy Universität zu Köln, Archäologisches Institut (FA 4820-03_55747,2.jpg, www.arachne.uni-koeln.de).

and the addressees as the Dioscuri (Di Filippo Balestrazzi 1985; Lippolis 2009). The originality of this image lies in the fact that it displays several types of representation of the divine twins: on the left we can see on a basis two anthropomorphic statues of the gods, recognizable by their headdress, the *pilos*; on the right on a rocky height overlooking a sea landscape an aniconic representation of the Dioscuri in the form of *dokana*, a beam assembly presenting the shape of the Greek letter Pi: Π (cf. Plutarch, *On Brotherly Love* 478a); and finally, in the center, on a higher basis (or an offering table) a pair of amphorae, the status of which is ambiguous: they have been interpreted either as cult objects (recipients containing *panspermia*) or as a symbolic representation of the gods. The twin gods have then been deliberately depicted in three different forms. That suggests that a different value was ascribed to each form in the field of the image. Among possible interpretations, one could suggest that the iconic statues and the aniconic *dokana* had a topical meaning: they may symbolize two geographically and chronologically distinct cult places, whereas the amphorae may refer to the divine presence as constructed during a certain ritual, probably a vow associated with navigation.

Several iconographic signs (*pilos*, amphorae, *dokana*, snake and others) on this relief are well attested in other iconographic corpora as the Laconian stelae or the Tarentine pinakes; they express in a codified visual language the nature of the honored deities. Yet, one encounters here a unique combination deliberately chosen by the commissioner Argenidas and probably commemorating a specific occasion. Paying close attention to consistency within this semantic system has led commentators to emphasize the "abnormal" iconography of the Dioscuri statues represented near the altar: the twins are not represented in the heroic semi-nudity that usually defines their status in the divine world, but are tightly wrapped in a cloak, as is the dedicator himself. Is this a personal choice or is it an echo of a lost iconographic model? Questions of this type are frequently implied in archaeological literature when it comes to searching for an image-type, often regarded as a "cult statue".

Cult Statue or Divine Image?

The notion of 'cult statue' has been the subject of numerous debates during the last decades. Those concerning the chryselephantine statue of Athena dedicated in the Parthenon on the Acropolis of Athens give a fairly good idea of possible expectations and methodological aporias in that field. The rich sources record concerning the statue mostly consists of texts, but the appearance of the statue can be precisely reproduced since many copies and reproductions have been preserved. Being 11.80 meters tall and covered by more than 1,000 kg of gold, this statue plays a particularly important role in the ancient and modern imagination as the acme of classical sculpture and the embodiment of Athenian power. Can we call it a cult statue (and to what extent)? Or is it only an oversized offering?

The debate has focused on three points: (a) formal characteristics of the statue and terms describing it in written sources; (b) its involvement in ritual practices; and (c) its architectural environment, especially its inclusion into the organization of the sanctuary. The first question comes up against a problem already identified by scholars studying Greek vocabulary of visual representation: none of the terms employed, *agalma*, *bretas* or *hédos* specifically designates a cult statue; the supposed epiclesis "Parthenos" may refer to the statue as being associated with the building (and not the reverse); finally the words "golden statue" by which it was frequently referred, emphasize its value as an offering rather than its religious function. The involvement of the statue in cultic practices cannot be established in a decisive way either: we know of no altar, and no priestess of Athena Parthenos, and the rare dedications took place before the construction of the Parthenon or at a very late (fourth century CE). Lastly, it is not clear whether the building housing the statue was intended for cultic practice. Admittedly, it has the architectural appearance of a temple, but the epigraphic documentation mostly presents it as a place for storing and hoarding the offerings, which comes close to a "temple treasury".

Recent studies have proposed different ways to soften the distinction too strictly established between cult statue and offering. Prost (2009), drawing on the work of Scheer (2000), replaces the statue into its diachronic context. He recalls the vicissitudes of this process especially during the third century BCE, and emphasizes the alternating episodes of fervor and oblivion. Within the sanctuary on the Acropolis, a great variety of layouts and many successive rearrangements point to a much greater fluidity of religious practices. Platt (2011) analyzes the epiphany processes developing through the different effigies of Athena on the Acropolis. Most notably, she shows that these should not be considered as competing with or excluding each other, but as being complementary. Though it was not at the center of the cult, Athena of Phidias took part in a renewed epiphany mode in the complex and dynamic construction of the figure of Athena Polias.

The brief review of this complex case allows for a better understanding of one of the methodological difficulties raised by the modern notion of "cult statue", which implies, on the one hand, that a particular image was intended to embody the divine presence permanently, and, on the other hand, that it represented the central pole of cult. The spatial layout of the great Greek and Roman public temples may be interpreted in this sense (see Chapter 24). In ancient texts, temple and statue are inseparably linked, as shown in a late period definition, which presents the tutelary divinity of a cult as the one "whose statue is in the center of the temple" (Servius, *Georgics* 3.16). Unfortunately,

archaeologists rarely have access to intact contexts and the sequencing of certain sanctuaries is more complex than generally expected (see also Chapters 2 and 23). Ancient testimonies, including that of Pausanias for Greek sanctuaries, also show that other statues, inside and outside of temples, were receiving cult honors. Conversely, recent inquiries on the status of offerings come up against the issue of statues offered to gods (*anathemata*): in the absence of specific context and inscriptions, nothing fundamentally distinguishes the offered statue from the statue placed at the center of the temple. Finally, rather than the statue, it is the altar and its surroundings, an area common to human beings and gods, that were the central place for most cult acts performed within a sanctuary.

Often based on written rather than on archaeological documentation sources, recent research on statues in Greece and Rome have rightfully questioned the notion of "cult statue": philologists scarcely find any traces of it in the Greek or Latin vocabulary, archaeologists generally face serious difficulties in identifying it due to lack of usable context, whilst art historians try, often in vain, to retrieve its reflection from votive or numismatic material. Should we then abandon any attempt of emic or etic approach? Reconsidering the ancient discourse is necessary in order to deconstruct the notion of 'cult statue'.

What is Idolatry?

When, at the end of the second century CE, Minucius Felix decided to present the defense of Christianity in the form of a philosophical dialogue, he took as starting point of the discussion a simple kiss thrown from his fingertips by Caecilius, a pagan to an image of Serapis. Octavius, a Christian, criticizes then "the blindness and crass ignorance of one who's dashing himself against stones, even though they may be carved, anointed and garlanded" (*Octavius* 2.4–3.1). However, the question of "idols" and their place in religious practices is hardly addressed later in the arguments put forward by both opponents. For the Church Fathers, stigmatizing the "idolatry" of traditional religions is not so much a matter of literally denouncing the veneration of images as of denouncing the falsehood of wrongly honored gods. Therefore, if images admittedly are central to the Christian criticism, it is only because, being themselves conceived as appearances (the fact that Christians chose the Greek term *eidolon* is significant in this respect), they provide clear proof of the futility of pagan gods. In that sense, the denunciation of idolatry does not target specific rituals concerning images; on the contrary, it is aimed at all acts of traditional worship: libations, sacrifices, festivals and priesthoods. Tertullian, who claims the birth of idolatry took place before images were invented, expresses this idea very clearly: even with no idol idolatry is committed (*On Idolatry* 3.1–4).

However, Christian apologists employ in their demonstrations arguments borrowed from the philosophical culture of their time, which was strongly influenced by the ancient debates on *mimesis* (imitation) and the status of the image, on the nature of the gods and their representation, or on piety and *superstitio* (superstition). Identifying their sources and reconstructing the notions they borrowed from these may help to better understanding of the ontological status of the divine, as perceived through divine images in traditional Greek and Roman systems. One of the favorite targets of Christian apologists is the materiality of divine images: as Ando (2008) has noted, "the seemingly irreducible materiality of idols, on the one hand, and the seeming impossibility of representing

anything invisible and incorporeal in or through matter, on the other, formed the basis of all critiques of idolatry in Graeco-Roman literature" (2008: 27). Far from presenting pagans as simple souls confusing images with gods, signifier with signified, the Church Fathers, including Augustine, consciously play with the famous "ambivalence" of the relation between medium and image coined by the work of Belting (1994). In polemics between them and cultivated pagans who, as heirs of Platonic theories, favored an allegorical reading of divine images, it was easy for them to put forward the ritual practice itself, which constructs the divine in very different ontological mode.

Let us give Minucius Felix the floor once more: "Unless perhaps the stone, or the wood, or the silver is not yet a god. When, therefore, does the god begin his existence? It is reeked, it is wrought, it is sculptured – it is not yet a god; lo, it is soldered, it is built together – it is set up, and even yet it is not a god; lo, it is adorned, it is consecrated, it is prayed to – then at length it is a god (*ecce ornatur, consecratur, oratur; tunc postremo deus est*), when man has chosen it to be so, and for the purpose has dedicated it" (*Octavius* 23.5). With the art of an African rhetor, he claims here the very same thing as our contemporary image anthropology does: the "divine" nature of image is not built up by the intrinsic qualities of the latter, but by the interaction between the image considered as a material object and the gaze that constructs it as a presence (or a desire of presence). In such religious systems as ancient polytheism, based on ritualism and conceived as complex communication systems, ritual practices were not confined to "magical" acts transforming the status of an object, but could be conceived as sophisticated strategies by means of which it became possible to construct a divine presence based on the ambivalence of the image, as medium. However, one must keep in mind the diversity and fluidity of these processes, which are specific to each culture.

Ambivalence of Images and Ritual Strategies

Therefore, one can take a fresh look at idols and examine them in the light of the criteria used to define them. How did visual devices (iconography, materials, spatial arrangement) and ritual performances contribute to constructing a specific status of the divine image? Platt's analyses (2011) on epiphany in Greco-Roman culture prove how fruitful this approach can be for understanding a visual culture of divine; they now inspire archaeologists and historians of religions. I will give here a few significant examples; further information can be found in recent articles from *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (Hölscher 2005; Linant De Bellefonds 2004).

How should statue consecration be considered? To what ritual, for example, does Minucius Felix allude when he states that the god is "consecrated"? At first glance, in Greek or Roman worlds there was no consecration ritual for cult images similar to those known for other cultures, such as the Mesopotamian Mîs-pî ritual (the "washing of the mouth") or the Egyptian "opening the mouth" ritual. In Mesopotamia in particular, the ritual not only required an anthropomorphic representation of the deity, but it also supposed denying the statue had been made by human hands. These rituals were not specific to divine images: the Egyptian ritual of "opening the mouth" was also part of the funerary practices.

In Greece, documentation on ritual consecration remains scarce and difficult to interpret. If there were placement procedures (*hidrusis*), they were not specific to divine images and left little place to the anthropomorphic character of gods. Similarly, in Rome, the consecration rituals were performed when establishing temples and altars as well as statues, all being perceived as the constituent elements of a divine property. The paradoxical nature of the divine image was probably expressed in another way, especially through etiological narratives defining some statues as miraculous or even *acheiropoietes*, "not made by human hands".

For instance, the choice of materials the divine images were made of may be considered in a dynamic approach to manufacturing and ritual. In Egypt, gold was considered the "flesh of the gods", while in Rome, it was not exclusively reserved to gods, through its use in statuary was no less significant. Its increasing use for imperial effigies was not intended to affirm the divine nature of the emperors but helped to emphasize their preeminence in the scale of honors. The sources concerning the statue of Serapis in Alexandria give insights into concrete procedures involved when manufacturing a divine figure: besides chosen iconography, the use of certain manufacturing techniques and materials (including use of mixed gemstones) helps express the nature of this new god and gives him shape of his own (Belayche 2011).

The anointing of stones and statues with perfumed oil, a typical gesture of common piety, has often been interpreted in very different ways, either functional (maintenance of cult objects) or symbolic (reinvigorating the divine effigy). More recently, this gesture has been brought into relation with the olfactory dimension of rituals (Prost 2008). Whatever ritual sequence the gesture took place in, the fragrance was associated with the statue and helped construct the divine presence in an epiphany mode. The well-documented presence of censers and incense burners in the sanctuaries then deserves to be taken into account when examining ritual procedures attested, for example, by epigraphy.

A description attributed by Augustine to Seneca, criticizing superstitious behaviors, gives an idea, though certainly distorted, of the lively spectacle that could be witnessed in Rome's great public sanctuaries: "But if ever you go up on the Capitol, it will make you feel ashamed just to see the crazy performances put on for the public's benefit, all represented as duties by light-hearted lunacy. So Jupiter has a special attendant to announce callers and another one to tell him the time; one to wash him and another to oil him, who in fact only mimes the movements with his hands. Juno and Minerva have special women hairdressers who operate some distance away, not just from the statue, but from the temple; they move their fingers in the style of hairdressers, while others again hold up mirrors" (Augustine, *City of God* 6.10). There is nothing strange about the actions of these devotees; instead, they offer a fully representative sample of the protocol governing relations between the faithful and the gods (paying homage, prayer, fulfillment of vows, etc.) and consisting of gestures staged in accordance with practices borrowed from the world of social relations between men (morning salutation, grooming and bathing, judicial patronage). Statues of gods here are at the center of the attention of the faithful and, even if Seneca criticized a perception much too literal of the anthropomorphic representation of gods, some details reveal at the same time the unalterable superiority of the divine body, which remains inaccessible.

Guide to Further Reading

For a discussion of idolatry and aniconism as cultural constructions in the Hellenistic world see Barbu (2011) and Gaifman (2012). For debates on Jewish aniconism and, more generally, on the cult images in the Ancient Near East, from a very extensive bibliography: Van der Toorn (1997) and Dick (1999). Issues of representation of the divine and visual construction through the statues are treated in Steiner (2001), Stewart (2003), Rüpke (2010), and Platt (2011). On problems of definition of images in cult see Martin (1987), Scheer (2000), Nick (2002), Hölscher (2005), Estienne et al. (2008), Prost (2009), and Mylonopoulos (2010). On the ambivalence of images and their religious definition consult Gordon (1979), Gladigow (1986, 1990), Graf (2001), and Ando (2008, 2010, 2011). For studies on images in ritual performances see Lorton in Dick (1999), Bettinetti (2001), Estienne (2001), Linant De Bellefonds (2004), Pirenne-Delforge in Estienne et al. (2008), and Prost (2008).

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CHAPTER 29

Instruments and Vessels

Anne Viola Siebert

Introduction

Men communicate with gods by means of ritualized sequences of actions which we describe as sacrifices or sacrificial acts.

In the Greek and Roman world, these sets of actions will generally have taken place in the way described by Homer in the Odyssey (*Odyssey* 3.418–72). As Veit Rosenberger has noted (2012: 57), Homer's main interest is clearly not in describing the religious and cultic reality of everyday life. Given the function of the Homeric epics as role models, however, his narrative will have had a certain influence on the actual cult practices performed by cultured people in Classical Antiquity.

It goes without saying that the literary account of an offering ritual did not necessarily have to conform to practical reality. In the case of Roman sacrifice, for example, the literary tradition is very vague concerning its degree of commitment and thus its reliability. The ancient authors have simply given us too many different descriptions of sacrificial practices in diverging cultic contexts. Images of ritual cultic and sacrificial practices may provide some much-needed clarity in this regard and it is fortunate that they survive in the archaeological record in so many different forms.

Ritual and Sacrifice as Routine Actions

In the definition proposed by the religious historian Jörg Rüpke, religion is a system of signs and symbols, and designates the ritual action of sharply-defined groups of various sizes and compositions (1997). These actions could be performed in small groups, such as the *familia*, the persons belonging to a single household, or the extended kinship group of the *gens*. Cult groups could also be spatially defined and thus extend to whole cities, districts or settlements.

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

To put it simply, one could say that the rituals of a specific cult are understood as a means to an end, as a medium used to communicate with an addressee, a personalized god or goddess. To the people of Antiquity, oral prayer was not enough to ensure that the addressee would actually "speak" in response and they accordingly employed additional mechanisms to make sure they would recognize any answers given (ibid.).

One of these was the exchange of gifts to communicate with deities and one side of this reciprocal exchange was the act of offering sacrifices and the practical procedures it entailed. By giving something, the "giver", i.e., the human, hoped to ensure that the recipient, i.e., the god, might give something in return and that this reciprocity might make apparent whether the deity was communicating with the giver or not – every person making an offering inevitably asks himself whether his gift was the right one. Other means of communication were divine signals that manifested in the sacrifice and had to be identified and read. This was done by means of rituals, including the litatio (*sacrum litatum* "favorable sacrifice") (Siebert 1999c) or the interpretation of divine signs (*divinatio*) (Briquel 1997; Rosenberger 1998; Bendlin, Rüpke, and Siebert 2001).

Sacrifices were performed to ensure the success of military campaigns, good harvests, and many other things. Rather than making an offering at random, however, the "giver" generally chose a gift tailored to the receiving deity. The deity's acceptance of the gift established a contract between both parties, perfectly expressed in the short Latin phrase "*do ut des*" (I give so that you may give). The regular repetition of the act of gift-giving transformed it into a routine action, a seamless part of everyday life in ancient Mediterranean society.

An example is provided by Lucius Messius, a soldier and customs officer (*beneficarius*) living in Carnuntum. He entered into a contract of this kind with a divine "partner" and even set it down in writing (Kremer and Römer-Martijnse 1987). The gift he had chosen for the deity was not a sacrificial animal, not wine or incense, but a well-crafted bronze stand, the lower part of which was shaped like a small altar and large enough to hold an offering bowl. The text inscribed on the four sides of the altar is simultaneously the text of the "contract" (Kremer and Römer-Martijnse 1987: 113):

Do	mi[n]o	ius<s>it v	M(*ilitem*)
	f[ieri]	isu L(*ucium*)	B(*eneficarium*) co<n>s(*ularis*)
	ut pact	es<s>ium	Legio(*nis*)
	us		

"To make it (this object) for the god, as he (the god) (had) agreed, he commanded in a dream Lucius Messius, beneficarius consularis of legio (?)". We do not know what the deity, whose name and responsibilities are not stated, showed, divined or promised Lucius in his dream. But it seems to have been important enough to induce him to dedicate this votive offering (Lat. *votum* = vow) to the deity. The dedication/sacrifice of the small bronze stand therefore constituted the conclusion of the contract between him and his divine interlocutor (*ex votum*).

In Roman Antiquity, the vast majority of people preferred unbloody sacrifices, mainly because animal sacrifices were more expensive. Besides the monetary value of an offering another crucial factor in a deity's acceptance of a "gift" was that the person making the sacrifice had the right mental disposition and attitude. In everyday life, sacrificial rituals

could be conducted with gifts readily available in every household. The gods were invited to participate in meals as guests (Cato, *On Agriculture* 132, 134; Ovid, *Fasti* 2.653, 4.935) and were offered wine or milk. Spices, herbs, incense, fruit and cakes (*farra*: Ovid, *Fasti* 1.338, 2.519), but also the first fruits of the fields (*primitiae*) might further enrich these dinners of the gods on occasion (*fruges*; 2.651; Cicero, *On the Laws* 2.8; Pliny, *Natural History* 18.7; *baccae*: Cicero, *On the Laws* 2.8).

Bloody sacrifice always resulted in the slaughter of an animal (*hostia*), which was selected specially for the deity and had to satisfy certain requirements, regarding both its impeccability (*purus*) and its age, color and sex.

In Rome and central Italy, cattle sacrifices were the most prestigious, but especially in private cults the less expensive pigs were far more common, since they were widespread as domestic livestock (Varro, *On Agriculture* 2.4.9). The most important sacrifice (*suovetaurilium*) consisted of cattle, pigs and sheep all at once and was performed in both public (*sacra publica*) and private cults (*sacra privata*). This highly-complex ritual was a *lustratio*, meaning that the sacrificial animals, pig (*sus*), sheep (*ovis*) and bull (*taurus*) were led or carried around a site, object or group that were to be "lustrated" (cleansed), and then sacrificed.

Sacrifices on Images

How can we visualize such a complex ritual? Fortunately, we can gain an impression from the large numbers of surviving sacrificial scenes, especially on reliefs. These generally show rather condensed snapshots of the various procedures and allow viewers – both ancient and modern – to clearly identify the different stages of the sacrifice. Furthermore, these images also provide insights into the instruments and vessels required for different rituals.

Let us first consider how a public sacrifice was generally conducted in the Roman Empire by looking at the so-called Vespasian Altar of Julio-Claudian date, found in Pompeii (fig. see http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/objekt/25373).

The front of the altar relief shows a togate man, his head covered (*capite velato*) and crowned with a wreath, standing beside a tripod. Two sacrificial butchers (*popae* or *victimarii*) – recognizable by their loincloths and naked upper bodies – are seen leading in a bull from the right, whilst another butcher stands behind the tripod, together with a flute player. Behind the back of the togate man, we see a boy attendant (*minister*), holding a jug and a bowl with a long handle and wearing a scarf around his neck, as well as an adult attendant (*camillus*) with an oval bowl. Since sacrifices of this kind were usually performed in the open or at an altar, the scene is set before a backdrop of architectural elements.

As is clearly visible on the Pompeian altar relief, the sacrificant – meaning the one paying for the sacrifice – could be identified by the toga fold drawn over his head like a hood. First, he ritually washed his hands with water taken from a moving body of water (Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.635; Livy 1.45.6; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.778). For this purpose, an adolescent *minister* (Fless 1995) poured water over the sacrificant's hands from a jug (*gutus*), caught it again in a bowl (*polybrum*), and handed him a towel (*mantele*) afterwards (Virgil, *Georgics* 4.377; Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 1.701). On the altar relief, this part

of the ritual is already over, but the presence of the young attendant with the necessary utensils (*gutus*, *polybrum*, *mantele*) still hints at this preparatory act.

After a prayer, the sacrificant performed a pre-sacrifice or a libation of wine (*libatio*) and incense which he poured over an altar. The Pompeian altar relief shows the togatus performing this action on a tripod, as was common.

The dedication and ritual cleansing of the animal marked the beginning of the actual sacrifice. During the *immolatio*, the sacrificant sprinkled the animal with salted spelt (*mola salsa*) (Prosdocimi 1991; Rüpke 2001: 116) and wine. The altar relief in Pompeii heavily condenses this procedure, since it is only hinted at by the adult attendant on the left. The oval bowl in the hands of this attendant is the vessel known as *molucrum* in which the *mola salsa* was made.

The *immolatio* can be seen a little more clearly on the right side of the so-called Altar of Scipio Orfitus (first century BCE; Rome, Mus. Cap. 1958; fig. see http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/694116). We see an adolescent attendant holding the bull by the horns whilst a togate man pours wine between its horns from a bowl.

A summary of the ritual so far is provided by the side panels of the Vespasian Altar in Pompeii in the form of the utensils required for preparation and pre-sacrifice. The right-hand side references the ritual hand-washing by showing a towel (*mantele*) as well as the gift of incense, represented by the incense box (*acerra*) (fig. see http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/3292589). The left-hand side concludes the documentation of the pre-sacrifice: jug (*gutus*), bowl (*patera*) and ladle (*simpuvium*) stand for the offering of wine made on an altar or tripod; the bowl can also be considered as a perpetuation of the *immolatio* of the sacrificial bull (fig. see http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/3292590).

What followed the *immolatio* is not show on the Vespasian Altar in Pompeii. Based on experience, contemporary viewers will, however, have known that the sacrificial butchers (*popae*) would proceed by preparing the bull they were leading for slaughter. The axe (*sacena*) held by the butcher in the foreground symbolizes the acts of stunning and killing the bull, which the sacrificant let the butcher perform while he himself made another offering of wine and incense on the altar. The other attendants would push the animal down and the *popa* would ask for permission ("*Agene*?", Shall I act?) to deal the stunning blow with his hammer or axe, as can be seen on another famous depiction, which will guide our further discussion.

The second phase, the killing of the sacrificial bull, is shown on an image that is unfortunately accessible only to a select few. The Tiberius cup found in the hoard at Boscoreale (first century CE; Paris, Louvre) shows precisely the moment of the killing of the sacrificial bull (fig. see http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/223896). The acts of stunning and *supponere cultros* (Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.248, *Georgics* 3.492; Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 6.248; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.599; Rüpke 2001: 143), i.e., stabbing the knife (*culter*) into the animal's carotid artery, performed by the *victimarius*, concluded the actual sacrifice (*animales hostiae*; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.231), at least if the intent was only to sacrifice the animal's life.

If the sacrifice was a *consultatoria hostiae* (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.5.5), however, an extispicy (*extispicium*, *haruspicium*) was conducted to explore the will of the god. For this purpose, the entrails (*exta*) of the animal were removed and their condition examined. Were they without flaw, the deity had accepted the sacrifice and thus engaged in reciprocal gift-giving. The deity then received its portion of meat.

Visitors to the Forum of Trajan used to be able to inspect the depiction of a sacrifice and an *extispicium* outside the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, which also happens to be the only known depiction of an extispicy in Roman art (fig. see http://census.bbaw.de/easydb/censusID=153365). Also in this case, an ancient viewer was probably able to identify the persons involved without difficulty. For the purposes of this chapter, the relevant group is the one on the far left of the image. We see the sacrificial bull lying on the ground, stunned by a heavy blow with the butcher's axe and killed with a stab in the neck. The ritual has progressed to the stage at which the entrails (*exta*) are removed and a butcher is seen engaged in their extraction, while another stands by to receive them, as we can see from the bucket (*aula/olla*) in his hands.

Unlike the Etruscan equivalent, the Roman *haruspicium* had no objections to having the entrails (*exta*) cooked after they had been removed, and the attendants used the bucket or pot (*aula/olla*) and a stirring spoon (*trua*) for precisely this purpose.

After the innards had cooled, they were minced with a knife and placed on the altar by the sacrificant as a meal for the deity; only then did the assembled banqueters begin to feast on the rest (Rüpke 2005).

If the deity was dissatisfied with the sacrifice the first time around, the ritual had to be repeated (*instauration sacrorum*).

Sacrificial and Cultic Utensils and their Uses

As the discussion of the pictorial evidence has shown, each phase of the cultic procedure required different utensils and vessels to ensure its smooth performance. The range of vessels and instruments used in sacrifices and cult was accordingly quite substantial. As regards their design and shape, these objects are purely functional, with the result that they could be used as items of everyday life in non-cultic contexts. Only special circumstances, i.e., a sacrificial context, caused them to become "cultic" or "sacrificial" instruments.

Vessels and Containers

The *acerra*, a covered box, is one of the few types of container that was used exclusively in a cultic context. It contained the incense (Festus 18 M, 17 L) that was sprinkled on the altar or into the fire (http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/3292589). This function is impressively visualized on an ivory panel showing a sacrifice being performed at an altar – a panel that was probably originally a side-panel of an actual *acerra* (Rome, Antiquarium Comunale; La Rocca 1976). Usually, this box was held by an adolescent attendant (*camillus/minister*) who approached the fire together with the sacrificant.

Depictions of libations and the necessary instruments – often found on the sides of altars – artistically attest to the great importance of liquid offerings in Roman religion. The vessels used at libations generally occur as a set, consisting of a jug (*gutus*), a bowl (*patera*) and a ladle (*simpuvium*). A second type of bowl involved in these offerings was the *polybrum*, a type of one-handed bowl. Together with the jug (*gutus*), it formed a set used for cultic hand-washing. Another integral part of the libation was the *simpuvium*, a small, cup-shaped vessel with a long handle. It served as a ladle to fill the offering dishes with wine.

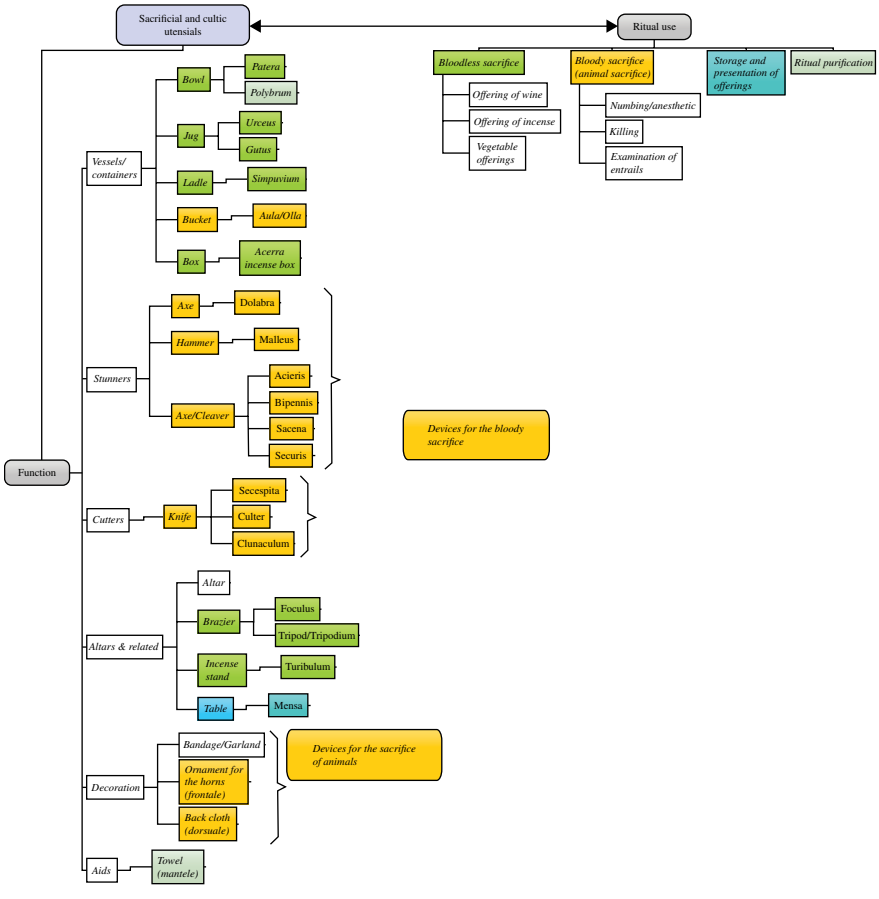

Figure 29.1 Sacrificial and cultic utensils and their use (Drawing by Anne Viola Siebert).

Stunners

Axes, cleavers and hammers were used only in animal sacrifices. Literary sources mention two types of cleavers, *sacena* and *securis*, as well as the axe (*dolabra*) and the hammer (*malleus*). The *securis* was actually used during the sacrifices, which had originally been true also of the *sacena*. In the historical Roman period, however, the latter mostly appears as a cultic instrument and a symbol of the pontificate (Friis Johansen 1932). The *malleus*, a hammer with a small and round, almost ball-shaped head, was used to stun the animals, mainly the larger ones, i.e., bulls and calves.

Cutters

Knives, *culter* and *secespita*, were needed for both animal sacrifice and for unbloody offerings and cultic ceremonies. The *secespita* was a long iron knife with a heavy, rounded handle. As various literary sources show, it was used by the flamines, the pontifices, the

flaminicae and the vestales, especially for cutting offering cakes. The pontifex used it to cut a tuft of hair off the sacrificial animal's forehead.

Equally well attested in both texts and images is the triangular *culter* used to puncture the animal's carotid artery (*supponere cultros*; Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 6.248). The depictions show this part of the sacrifice only in the case of cattle. Ovid, a Roman poet of the Augustan period (43 BCE–17 CE), further noted that the *culter* was also used to slice open the animal's body (*Fasti* 1.346f.).

Altars

Just as the sacrifice was the focal point of Roman religious practice, altars and their functionally-related derivatives played an important part in sacrificial cult.

The altar (*ara*) was used to burn those parts of the sacrifice that were given to the gods. The original meaning of the word was "fire pit" or "place for burnt sacrifices", but its scope slowly extended to encompass all sites of sacrifice, even though it usually refers to a stone altar. In principle, an *ara* was defined by the temple and sacrificial cult it was associated with. *Arae* could also, however, be spatially unrelated to the temple and be erected in a grove or as temporary structures made from very simple materials, such as earth or stones (*arae temporales, arae gramineae*). We also know that grassy sods or chunks of clay were packed onto altars to function as a flameproof, protective layer. The later custom of placing grassy sods on every altar is a remnant of early cultic practices. Even in the middle Empire we still find *arae temporales*, for example in the cult of the Arval Brothers. The design of votive altars closely follows that of sacrificial altars, especially from the first century CE onwards – a trend that becomes visible in the perpetuation of the sacrifice in the reliefs that adorn the sides of these altars. A particularly impressive example is provided by an altar dedicated to Minerva (Trento, Mus. Prov. d'Arte, Sez. Archeologica, inv.-no. 508, early first century AD). Among other things, its right-side panel shows sacrificial knives (*cultri*) and an offering platter (*lanx/satura*) with a cake.

Small portable altars, *foculi*, were used for the unbloody sacrifices that preceded every animal sacrifice ("*ture et vino in igne foculo fecit*"). Wine, incense and other offerings taken from the sacrificant's banquet were sacrificed and burnt here. Incense burners, such as *thymiaterium* and *turibulum*, were used solely for offerings of various kinds of incense.

Tables (*mensa*) were used to hold offerings and instruments, and to keep them ready at hand. As a basic component of any temple inventory (*supellex sacra*; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.11.5–6), the *mensa* was mainly used to hold items before and after the actual sacrifice. It was also extremely important as a functional cultic object, and possessed a presentative function.

The Romans are known to have dedicated tables to the gods. In Roman state cult, this is attested for Juno, Jupiter and Dea Dia, and as for the foreign gods, we hear of Cybele, Mithras, Priapus, Bacchus and Silvanus receiving such dedications. The custom of offering a sacrifice to Hercules and Juno Lucina on a table on occasion of a smooth birth is attested only in literary sources. In addition, the *mensa* was also used in the *lectisternium* after its alleged introduction in 399 BCE: during this festive meal offered to a

deity, the image of the god lay on a bed (*lectus*), while the food offering stood on a *mensa* before it.

For normal sacrifices performed at home, the existing table was consecrated by placing on it a salt cellar, a *patella* and an image of a deity, thus transforming it into an offering table (*mensa*).

Conclusion

The sacrifice, the act of giving a gift to the gods, is one element in a sequence of complex ritual acts, including prayers, processions, music and communal banqueting.

In Roman culture the sacrifice was an omnipresent and routine act that could require a large number of instruments (sacrificial and cultic) and experts (priests and attendants).

Sacrifices were performed in the house and at temples, at festivals celebrating events in the lives of individuals and families (e.g., coming of age or marrying), on occasion of political and military actions (taking office, declaring war), or out of gratitude for one's recovery from an illness, for a smooth journey and more.

Guide to Further Reading

A first comprehensive attempt to precisely define the instruments employed in sacrifice and cult was made by Renate Von Schaewen in 1940. The more recent and much extended comprehensive study of the instruments and utensils necessary for the smooth performance of Roman cult ceremonies and sacrifices is provided by Anne Viola Siebert (1999a; summarized in Siebert 1999b). This study draws on archaeological sources of various kinds (large-scale reliefs, depictions on buildings, gems and coins), which are systematically analyzed and contrasted with the relevant textual evidence. These works seem to be the only comprehensive treatments of the uses, forms and functions of sacrificial and cultic instruments and vessels.

All other studies seem to be less broad in scope and focus on specific types of sacrifice or instrument. These include Mischkowski's (1917) study on offering tables, Friis Johansen (1932) on sacrificial axes, Zwierlein-Diehl (1980) on certain sacrificial vessels and Dick (1973) on the attire of priests. These publications conclude our discussion of the current state of research.

These older studies on individual types of vessels and instruments are still worth reading, however, as is Nuber's (1972) investigation that deals primarily with libation utensils, i.e., jug and bowl, and provides many images and photographs. Hilgers' (1969) study can also be recommended, even though it is not solely focused on Roman cult practice. It is fundamental for interpreting the functionality and identifying the names of Roman vessel types, and is especially helpful for its extensive treatment of the Latin literary sources.

An excellent general overview of the practical side of cult is provided by the chapter entitled "Les sacrifices dans le monde romain" in the first volume of the *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (*ThesCRA*). Its detailed definitions of various types of

sacrifices and the procedures involved, its step-by-step accounts of cultic acts, its explanations of the participating groups of people and its large catalogue of objects and images make it an indispensable source of information on this subject.

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CHAPTER 30

Anatomical ex votos

Günther Schörner

Introduction

If in Roman imperial times a man or woman visited the Athenian Pnyx, where in Classical times the people's assembly met and adopted resolutions, he or she would be attracted not only by this history-charged locale but by a very impressive and – according to modern Western ways of viewing – disturbing picture: the visitor saw a large number of reliefs depicting faces, eyes, ears, feet, arms, hands, buttocks and female breasts and pelvises. In the newly-established sanctuary of Zeus Hypsistos a large number of stone slabs representing body parts were imbedded in niches hewn into the natural rock (Forsén 1996: 60–72). Thanks to their very naturalistic appearance the reliefs own great expressiveness evoking the idea of body care and healing in a modern biomedical sense. Though – or perhaps because – the meaning of these dedications seems unambiguous it has to be questioned in which contexts these body part votives were used and what are they standing for.

Definition

Body part votives or anatomical ex votos are an ill-defined group of votive offerings. Fundamental for labeling a votive as body part votive is that they were found in a sacral context, mainly in sanctuaries, and that they form part of the human body (for animal body part reliefs see below) in a more or less naturalistic manner. In common use all representations of limbs, of external and internal genitalia, and of viscera are named as body part votives. Despite these seemingly clear-cut conditions the classification remains ambiguous in many cases. Thus the denotation of terracotta heads and torsi in Italian sanctuaries as body part votives is contested or at least downplayed (Hofter 1985). Even

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

Figure 30.1 Votive relief; Melos (1./2. Jh. n. Chr.); London, BM. Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

the basic concept for the denomination as body part votive is unclear: Is the pars-pro-toto character as synecdotal relationship from the part to the whole essential or is its use in rituals concerning fertility, wellbeing and health care the key factor for the definition as body part votive (Ferris 2003). The problems in finding a sound definition mirror the varied, but indecisive approaches to body part votives:

- art-historical approach: description, typology and chronology of body part votives; regarding questions of craftsmanship and materiality, relations to other sculptural works
- religious approach: body part votives as offerings focusing on the deities to whom they were dedicated and the kind of rituals they were used for
- medico-historical approach: body part votives as testimonies of anatomical knowledge; concerning the diseases and deformations depicted.

Additional to these main directions of questioning a particular historical interpretation is current for the interpretation of Romano-italic body part votives as indicators for the "Religious Romanization" in Republican Italy (Torelli 1999: 41f.; De Cazanove 2000).

All these approaches are eligible but should be integrated in a web regarding rituals, dedications and health care and healing procedures. It should be questioned which role body part votives play in the more basic conception, that body, disease and cure are all socially constructed (e.g., Kirmayer 2004).

The ambiguity in defining body part votives formally or functionally is most obvious whilst attempting to discern anatomical ex votos from body part votives with other denotations (Forsén 1996: 9–27).

- ears designating gods hearing the prayers (Theoi epekooi)
- hands abbreviating the raised arms for prayer
- hands as symbol of divine power
- hands in the gesture of gift-giving
- feet indicating divine or human presence
- feet/legs pointing to walking in wider sense (e.g., trespassing).

Because all these dedications depict limbs or sensory organs they are to name body part votives in a wider sense but they cannot be included into the framework of fertility and health care. For the sake of clarity a differentiation between anatomical ex votos and body part votives as activity indicators is proposed.

Figure 30.2 Terracotta votive torso; Etruria (hellenistic); Ingolstadt, Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum. Photo: courtesy of Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum.

Chronology

Body part votives appear over 2500 years in antiquity but the temporal distribution is uneven. First specimens are attested in Minoan Crete at peak sanctuaries such as Petsophas (Myers 1903). In the Archaic Artemision of Ephesos numerous miniature gold and electron dedications representing eyes, ears, hands and legs were detected (Hogarth 1908). Body part votives were more numerous by the fourth century BCE, both in Greece and Italy. The dedicatory practice reached its peak in the Hellenistic (third to first centuries BCE) and the Roman Imperial Era (first to third centuries CE) but with different local core areas. The custom of dedicating anatomical ex votos was evidently not adopted in Christian Late Antiquity but experienced a revival during and after the Middle Ages (Kriss-Rettenbeck 1972).

Spatial Distribution

Offering body part votives is a widespread, but not comprehensive, phenomenon in Classical antiquity. After limited occurrences in Minoan until Archaic times in Crete and Ephesos, body part votives were offered in many sanctuaries of mainland Greece with fifth-century Athens (and maybe Corinth) as initial points. Regarding Italy, the first anatomical dedications (made of bronze) are attested in Northern Italy (Northern Etruria, Adriatic). First metal specimens stem from Sicily. Most Italian ex-votos, however, are found in sanctuaries in western-central Italy forming the so-called Etrusco-Laziale-Campanian group with extensions till Lucera and Paestum (see Comella 1981: 769, fig. 3).

In the Roman Empire, body part votives became very rare in Italy after the first century BCE but are common in a wide array of provinces in both the Western and the Eastern halves of the Empire. Especially numerous are anatomical ex votos in Achaea, Creta, Asia, Cyprus and Gallia. They are not attested, e.g., in the African provinces; also the occurrence in Britain is very sparse (Ferris 2006). Basically it has to be considered that the state of documentation is very uneven.

Presentation of the Material and Discussion

Late Classical until Imperial Mainland Greece: Achaea

Except for the terracotta votives in the Corinthian Asclepieion (Roebuck 1951) the anatomical ex-votos in Greece are made of stone, preferably marble (Van Straten 1981; Forsén 1996, 2004). Generally, they represent the body part in relief thus resembling the large group of narrative votive reliefs. The most numerous group (Forsén 1996: 108–11) of reliefs depicts female breasts (41), followed by legs/feet (27), female pelvises (26), arms/hands (19) and ears (12). Compared to female genitalia, penises (12) are underrepresented. Only rarely attested are eyes (8), buttocks (4) and shoulders (1). That this relation is dependent on the material used is proven by inventories from the Athenian Asclepieion listing body part votives made of metal (bronze, silver, gold) where eyes are the most common dedications (Aleshire 1989). These inscriptions testify the increasing

importance of anatomical votives: The portion of metal ex-votos grows from 7.5% in 341/340 BCE to 47% in 244/43, attesting their increasing importance as confirmed by archaeological evidence (Forsén 1996: 117). Because most of the reliefs are not found in a firm archaeological context the inventories provide important information about dedications offered together with anatomical ex-votos. According to epigraphic evidence one body part in several copies or combinations of two or more body parts could be dedicated by one person.

The execution of the reliefs follows the stylistic taste of the date of origin but most dedications are of modest craftsmanship. The standardization of weight is attested for metal ex-votos in the inventory lists but the lack of any deformation depicted by the representations of limbs and organs hints at an execution in advance.

Many of the body part reliefs bear short dedicatory inscriptions, mainly consisting of the name of the dedicant and the deity endowed (Forsén 1996, 161–8). Verb forms of *euchein* show that most dedications are made after the ritual has completed (Schörner 2003: 14–20) but the vow could also be made in advance (for the ritual see Chapter 3). The (successful) cure is mentioned only in a few cases (Schörner 2003: 22f.). According to the epigraphic evidence all anatomical ex votos are made by individuals, no public institution is named. Most dedications are personal, but in only a few examples the votive was put up for a relative. The prosopographical value of the inscriptions is limited but nothing points to exclusively lower class or slave dedicants.

Surely most of the body part votives were set up for a greater public because in many sanctuaries niches for the reliefs (Zeus Hypsistos, Aphrodite) were cut in the rock and even the more precious dedications made of metal were overtly displayed.

According to the inscriptions the divine receiver of the dedications can be classified into two related groups: healing deities and healing heroes and female deities assigned with care for fertility, birth and child rearing (Forsén 1996: 133–59). Most of the dedications to fertility goddesses were made by women (28 out of 29 dedications) and consists of female genitalia (breasts, pelvises) thus demonstrating that probably not all anatomical ex-votos were made because of illness but for maintaining or improving the reproduction process and lactation. Dedications to healing gods were made by women and men in nearly equal measure (44 women of 78 dedications) but in respect to the overall figures of dedications in Roman Greece women are strongly over-represented. Contrary to former assumptions, anatomical ex-votos do not indicate the specialization of sanctuaries to one specific disease.

The custom of dedicating body part votives began to die out during the third century CE. Reasons for this disappearance are hard to find but the most common assumption is that marble, the most important material the ex-votos are made of, was no longer available or only with difficulty (Forsén 1996,176).

Imperial Western Central Anatolia (Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia)

During the second and third centuries CE, two groups of monuments with representations of body parts are attested in Lydia and Phrygia (Van Straten 1981): votive stelai depicting one or more body parts, and so-called confession stelai.

The votive reliefs are made of local marble and can be dated from the typology used on the stelai or by epigraphic evidence (Drew-Bear, Thomas, and Yıldızturan 1999; Forsén 2004). They mostly show eyes, legs, hands and female breasts. Pelvises/buttocks of both sexes and other parts of the body are rarely attested. In some cases, two or more body parts or a body part and a person in full figure are depicted. No stelai were found in situ as no entire sanctuary has been excavated, but most likely other types of votives were dedicated together with body part votives, e.g., reliefs depicting gods, children, animals or adult dedicants, statuettes and altars.

Part of the stelai bears dedicatory inscriptions using regular Greek dedicatory formulas. All reliefs are dedicated to local deities like Zeus (with different epikleses), Men or Anaitis, but no specific healing god is mentioned. As in mainland Greece, the word *euche* is often used but the question of whether the reliefs were always placed as thanks offerings could be disputed. Some inscriptions name the body part which is to be cured or, in a more general matter the body as a whole (but with no corresponding depiction).

Confession stelai show a similar spectrum of body parts, with eyes figuring most prominently followed by legs, arms/hands and buttocks (Petzl 1994; Chaniotis 1995; Belayche 2008). The most prominent feature of the confession stelai is the inscription in which a person confesses a sin committed by himself or – rarely – another person (relative). All texts are dedicated to local deities and, like the votive stelai, no healing deity *stricto sensu* is named. The sin mostly consists of transgressing sacral boundaries or offending the deity by improper behavior (Chaniotis 1995); as a consequence, the deity punished the sinner (or a relative) with disease, accident or death. As the next step, the sinner expiates the transgression by erecting a confession stele. The disease is either stated by indicating verbally and/or iconographically the body part afflicted or is referred to more generally. Most diseases affect the eyes (nearly 50%), legs and female breasts or consist of mental illness. Problems with buttocks, arms or male genitalia are only rarely attested. The most significant trait of these inscriptions is, of course, the causal connection of sin and disease, thus providing a theory of illness/disease directly connected with the representation of body parts. Both votive stelai and confession inscriptions are no longer attested after the third century CE like the other sculptural dedications stemming from rural sanctuaries in Central Anatolia.

Republican Central Italy

Apart from metal specimens in Northern Etruria and the Adriatic region of the Padana and some other more dispersed appearances, the dedication of body part votives is mainly confirmed in western central Italy (Southern Etruria, Latium, Campania = ELC). Since the late fourth century BCE, anatomical ex votos were the most common type of dedication in this region (Turfa 2004; Fabbri 2010). Body part votives are attested in 130 of approximately 200 sanctuaries. In contrast to most body part votives in Greece and Anatolia, the ex-votos of the ELC group are made of terracotta and are three-dimensional models of body parts. Only specific types are arranged as relief-like tableaus. The typology of Italian anatomical votives is more complex than those of Greek or Anatolian dedications (Comella 1981; Recke and Wamser-Krasznai 2008). Arms/hands and legs/feet are the most numerous group. Beside breasts, genitalia, eyes, ears and torsi,

other body parts are represented, e.g., noses, elbows, single fingers and toes and tongues. More significant are different parts of heads, like half-heads and masks, or viscera. The models of intestines involve livers, hearts, uteri (mostly gravid) and testicles. A special way of depicting the inner organs are the so-called polyvisceral votives assembling trachea, heart, lungs, liver, stomach, bladder and kidneys (in some cases also uteri) in a more-or-less naturalistic arrangement (Tabanelli 1962; Decouflé 1964). Different subgroups can be formed, such as polyvisceral tableaus, opened torsi or busts with innards. Also the uteri models are to be classified in uteri *a mandorla* or uteri *a ciabatta* (Turfa 1994). In contrast to the limbs and external organs the realism of the models is an issue; most representations of viscera are not naturalistic but stylized, copying animal innards, enriched with further decorative details or symmetrically arranged (Tabanelli 1962; Decouflé 1964). Significant for the symbolic character of Italian anatomical ex-votos are the heart models labeled (because of their shape) as *cippetti* (Turfa 1994). They could be identified as hearts only by deducing from the position of similar objects in polyvisceral votives.

The ex-votos are mould-made. Because an inexpensive raw material like clay was used and the ex-votos were produced in bulk, it was supposed that the dedicators belonged to the lower strata of the society like small landholders (Glinister 2007), but this assumption is far from being certain. Additional painting and further modeling is often proven by work marks. Holes or added stands point to public display in the sanctuaries even if all dedications were found in deposits. In some uterus models, clay balls were enclosed so they could be used as rattles, thus proving a use exceeding their mere deposition on a shelf.

Together with anatomical ex-votos, a large array of other votive types have been found: human statues and statuettes, statuettes of different domestic animals and body parts of animals, e.g., bovine hooves (Söderlind 2004).

Body part dedications are not evenly distributed in Italian sanctuaries. In most sanctuaries, only a small sample of anatomical ex votos is attested, often in an idiosyncratic combination. Only in a small group of sanctuaries, as in Caere, Tarquinia, Vulci, Veji or Fregellae, have all types of body part dedications been found comprising the rare polyvisceral votives not witnessed elsewhere.

The spread of anatomical ex-votos was connected with Roman expansion in Italy and has been interpreted as firm archaeological evidence for Religious Romanization (Torelli 1999: 41f.; De Cazanove 2000). However, recent studies (Glinister 2007; Stek 2009) reject this hypothesis, stressing the private character of the votive practice which was surely no matter of interest for religious policy of the Roman *res publica* (if there was any at all).

Because of the lack of epigraphic or literary evidence the specific use of the body part votives is difficult to define. Many anatomical ex-votos could be interpreted as offerings in respect of health cure or in a context of fertility and the reproduction process. Other more symbolic meanings like presence are not to be excluded automatically. As in Greece and Anatolia, it is not evident if the terracottas were dedicated as vows or as thank offerings. Deformations or symptoms are depicted only in a negligible number (if at all) but this should not be interpreted as a sign of successful cure.

Body part votives were not restricted to sanctuaries of healing or fertility deities. Fundamentally, all gods could receive such a dedication. In contrast to Greece, models of breasts and female genitalia could be offered to male gods. Many of the sanctuaries are

extra-urban, but deposits of anatomical ex-votos were also found within larger settlements and cities.

The dating of the ELC dedications is a major problem because non-stylistic criteria are lacking. The copious dedication of anatomical ex-votos began surely before 291 BCE Asclepius was established at Rome. The assumed dependence of the Italian votives from the Asclepieion at Corinth could also not be sustained anymore (Fabbri 2010 against Lesk Blomerus 2002). Thus the closely-related body part votives in Etruria, Latium and Campania seem to be a specific local development influenced by predecessors in Northern Etruria. More puzzling is the relatively sudden end of the offerings at the end of the second century and the beginning of the first century BCE with only a few sanctuaries (e.g., Fontanile di Legnisegna) showing a continued practice into the first century CE. Most explanatory models name external factors like the development of the villa schiavistica-system and the closely-associated rural depopulation because the presumed dedicators of the terracotta votives, small landholders and tenants, were forced to migrate into cities, especially Rome. An explanation encompassing a multi-faceted approach seems to be more valid (Stek 2009: 213–9).

Imperial Gaul

Body part votives are widely attested in Roman Gaul (Bourgeois 1991; Bauchhenß 2004). They were made of different materials, mainly stone and wood but also sheet metal. Many types of anatomical votives are attested, such as feet/legs, arm/hands, heads, naked and dressed male torsi with genitalia, naked female torsi with genitalia, breasts, female pelvises, but also polyvisceral tableaus indicating trachea, lungs, heart, stomach and kidneys carved in the round or pressed into metal sheets. Body part votives are a characteristic trait of fountain sanctuaries in Gaul, but similar dedications are found also in *Raetia*, thus establishing a connection to healing forces of spring water (Csysz 2009). In the best documented sanctuary, the sanctuary of Fontes Sequanae (sources de la Seine), beside anatomical ex-votos sculptures of humans in nearly all stages of life were offered to the goddess (Deyts 1983, 1994; Aldhouse Green 1999): swaddled babies, children with animals and adults, mainly men with purses. The practice of gift-giving is iconographically conceptualized in a particular way by depicting stylized hands with forearms holding an offering. In this way, a new kind of body part votive indicating an activity was developed. More conventional dedications like altars and coins were also common at Fontes Sequanae, thus pointing to a manifold dedicatory practice. The votives in Fontes Sequanae and elsewhere could address both the realm of health care and that of fertility and child rearing but the stylized arm arches show that other meanings should not be excluded. Legs and feet, for instance, could be read as signs of pilgrimage (Aldhouse Green 1999). The inscriptions in Fontes Sequanae attest the use of Latin votive formulas like *v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito/ae)*; therefore at least a part of the dedications, body part models and other types, were offered as *solutiones*, after the vow was solved. The sculptures cannot be dated stylistically but for prosopographical and palaeographical reasons the epigraphic evidence points to the first to the third centuries as the time span when body parts were dedicated in Gaul.

Body Part Votives and their Role in Health Care Systems

The Methodological Framework

Body part votives were interpreted in different ways according to the diverse approaches used. The most influential way to reconstruct the original use of the dedications is surely to assign them a function in rituals concerning health care, whether initially accompanying the prayer as request for health, or at the end, closing the treatment as a thank offering. Thus body part votives were scrutinized to see if they show any deformations or signs of disease, thus revealing a pathological condition before cure, or whether they document the healed limb or organ after cure (Recke and Wamser-Krasznai 2008).

This approach implies concepts of disease and health care which are both homogeneous and related to our own Western ideas, and does not consider that health, illness/disease and cure are socially constructed and therefore subject to change. Thus a closer examination of these concepts is needed to better understand which role body part votives played in ancient health care systems (Kleinman 1980).

According to Kleinman, health care systems are primarily local cultural systems but share five "core clinical functions" (for an adoption of this approach, see Nijhuis 1995: 51):

- the cultural construction of illness and disease. Illness is defined as the patient's view of his own state of being sick, whilst disease is the term used by the healers/medics to describe and explain the case. Thus the involvement of a healing expert always results in a reformulation from illness to disease ("sickness" is used as umbrella term encompassing both illness and disease)
- a general framework for guiding the health care process and assessing treatment approaches, for example a general concept called explanatory model, or how patients were afflicted by sickness
- the treatment of particular cases of sickness based upon communication about their illness by the patient and redefinition as disease by the healer
- healing activities including all types of therapies having physiological, psychological and social effects: diagnostic procedures, the use of medicines, manipulations of the body, cathartic practices, rituals and ceremonies. The healing activities mirror regularly the explanatory model of sickness
- the managing of therapeutic results answering the question "does the health care system work?" The results are not only restricted to cure or treatment failures in a strictly biomedical sense but include a large set of socially- and culturally-relevant alterations. It is important that health care systems interpret their own results in a self-confirming way.

The following studies in which ways body part votives formed a part in this framework and to what extent the function of the dedications can be defined. An attempt is made using the body part votives of Greece, Anatolia and Italy as starting point (Gaul is omitted because no additional aspects occur).

Greece

The archaeological evidence provided by body part votives in Greece is augmented by inscriptions on the dedications themselves or on stelai like the healing reports from Epidauros called iamata (Edelstein and Edelstein 1945). In most cases, the origin of sickness remains unclear; only a few of the iamata record cases of punishment by Asclepius (Chaniotis 1995). Deformations or symptoms of sickness were not depicted by anatomical ex-votos, thus the pathological state of illness was of no particular interest. The dedications, however, testify at attempts to localize illness experiences. The separation between sanctuaries of healing gods and heroes and those of goddesses taking care of propagation and child rearing suggests a specialization in cure, although in both cases similar rituals to invoke divine help were performed. Because cure by medics and priests is well attested in Greek healing sanctuaries, in all likelihood communication took place between patients and sanctuary personnel entrusted with health care and patients.

Thus, the patient's illness was renamed and labeled as disease via diagnosis by medical experts. In respect of body part votives, a mediation process between patient/dedicator, healer/priest and sculptor/seller of the ex-voto has to be postulated. Because the dedications were on display in the sanctuaries, publicity was an issue. Many of the reliefs bear inscriptions, thus an individual case could be reconstructed although the spare prosopographical indications impede an identification for strangers. The inscriptions on the body part votives suggest that most of them were set up at the end of the healing ritual but the dedication at the beginning of the healing process is also epigraphically indicated. The different kinds of treatment are listed in the healing reports involving incubation, other different rituals and the use of medicines and body manipulations. Although the iamata are focused on cures, the body part votives only seldom refer to recovery.

Anatolia

The confession inscriptions of Anatolia are perfectly suited to reconstruct the explanatory system underlying concepts of illness/disease and healing in an ancient society. Sickness and sin were closely connected, even forming a chain of cause (sin) and effect experienced by the sinner (sickness). One could ask whether the causal relationship was established by the patient or by priests in the local sanctuaries. The focal point is the translation of illness symptoms into a religious narrative. In my opinion, this cultural effort should be accredited to religious specialists because some inscriptions report that the sinners consult the gods in order to get a command about what they should do. The deity answered mostly by means of an oracle needing some sort of interpretation. Surely cult personnel were involved in the further process of erecting the stele and editing the text. This had to happen in cooperation with the sculptor. Punishment by sickness is only one way the deity could act. The disease is mostly limited to one single body part, thus the depiction of the afflicted limb or organ is a means of localization. An aetiopathology is not given: the deity imposes the disease as a matter of fact. Because of the entirely religious cause of the sickness the treatment must happen in strictly ritual terms. Thus, the question of whether the priests in the sanctuaries were medically skilled is extraneous. The objective of the therapy is expiation, which signifies reconciliation with the deity and

the affirmation of the divine power. To cure the disease was not the prime target although it could be considered a welcome side effect. As a consequence, healing was never an important issue and is only seldom mentioned in the inscriptions. Even if it is attested that the sinner was saved, this does not mean that he was healed in strictly biomedical terms. One of the conditions of expiation was to erect a stele propagating the authority and supremacy of the deity to all readers (and viewers). Thus the production of publicity was one of the key concerns of the ritual. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the stelai stood alone or together with other specimens. The appearance, however, must be different from the healing sanctuaries in Greece with body part depictions and cure all playing a minor role.

Italy

Due to the lack of inscriptions, only the archaeological evidence can be interpreted. Illnesses are no subject of greater interest because pathological alterations are indicated only by an insignificant (and doubtful) number of body part votives. The anatomical ex-votos attest, however, that illness was localized by depicting the afflicted body part and maybe somatised seeing heads, half-heads and "masks" as indicators for headache, migraine or mental problems. The association with other votive types testifies that health care was firmly connected with fertility and proliferation. The statuettes of animals and models of animal body parts clearly show that human and animal spheres were intertwined and health problems treated in similar ways. The dedications in sanctuaries indicate that the gods were considered as decisive powers for cure; thus it could be implied that the gods were seen to be responsible for illness experience. Nothing in the archaeological record hints at the presence and involvement of healers or medics. The illness could be diagnosed by the patient. A kind of communication or negotiation is required only between dedicator and coroplast/seller of the terracottas. Even if the ex-votos were designed according to individual wishes, no mediator is mandatory. Ex-votos were used as public media. Because inscriptions on the offerings are lacking, it could be supposed that – at least for the priests – the general impression of a sanctuary full of offerings was more important than the individual case which could be reconstructed only in terms of personal memory. Most significant is that hints for a successful treatment of sickness are absent, thus a cure in biomedicial terms should not be considered as the focal point. It is debatable whether the treatment took place in the sanctuary, considering the prominent role *medicina domestica* plays in Latin literature (Jackson 1988).

Conclusion

A crucial trait of body part votives is their fragmentary nature in that they never depict the body as a whole. The reproduction of one limb, one organ or an assemblage of organs has in the first place to be seen as an effort to localize the part of the body for which divine help is requested. That signifies a specification eventually thought to facilitate the engagement of the deity. It is worth mentioning that this act of localization evidently conflicts with the Hippocratic theory of humours and the development of

diseases but there are hints for a reconciliation of Hippocratic medicine and religious health care, especially in Greece (Longrigg 1993).

Beside localization, body part votives require somatization, i.e., creating a link between health concerns of different natures with a specific body part. Thus anatomical ex-votos were used to enable better communication between dedicant and deity. The visualization of health or illness was not required.

Further more profound ways to interpret fragmentation of anatomical ex-votos are discussed. According to Ryanearson (2003), the part character of the dedications stands in contrast to the wholeness and soundness of the patient's body outside the sanctuary. Thus symbolic fragmentation is necessary to guarantee the completeness of the healing process.

Another interpretative approach is proposed by Hughes (2008). She interprets fragmentation as the representation of illness experienced as a state of disintegration by the patient. Additionally, fragmentation plays an essential role in iamata from Epidauros; thus it is also a metaphor of the healing process.

While Ryanearson is stressing the outcome, the healed body, Hughes focuses on the beginning, the diseased body. Both authors, however, have in common that they deal with cure but not considering other aspects related with anatomical ex-votos. Some phenomena cannot be explained by these theories, as the dedication of body part votives and statue together attested in Greece or Anatolia. Furthermore, not all body part votives were connected with cure, thus the most probable explanation for fragmentation still remains localization with its different aspects. One of these could be enchainment, where the intentional deposition of one part of a greater whole involves and represents the spatial and ideational connection between the giver of the fragment and the place where the fragment was laid down (Chapman 2000).

The localization expressed by the body part votives was conducted by the patient/dedicant; further mediation by a priest or medic was not mandatory. The offerings were the expression of individual commitment (forced or not) to a deity. Because the dedications were made out of the patient's perspective and how they referred to the illness, the translation into disease by an expert could be omitted. In the case of illness (but also in the case of concerns for fertility), the choice of the very object which should be offered depended on different factors: the experience or feelings of the patient, the establishment of a link between experience and organ/limb and the options of possible ex-votos, conditioned by the financial resources of the dedicant, the range of goods offered by sculptors or coroplasts and the common votive praxis in each individual sanctuary.

It has been seen as a problem that most of the body part votives are not of high intrinsic value falling out of the system of religious economy (Gladigow 1995) but it should be considered that the dedications form part of specific rituals operating on a merely symbolic level.

The treatment by the god or other persons is never represented as a narrative; likewise, aetiopathology is never picked out as a central theme. It is even doubtful if the body part dedications document a specific state of health or disease. Thus, body part votives should be seen as conventional signs in a communication process, not as close imitations of healthy or ill/deformed body parts or organs. Their naturalistic design can mainly be ascribed to the formal conventions of depiction in antiquity. In many cases, they are examples of a fictional anatomy (ibid.), especially the polyvisceral votives and the *cippetti* in Italy, and some of the dedications in Gaul show that naturalism was no *conditio sine qua non*.

One common trait was the display of body part votives in the public area of the sanctuary independent of chronological or geographical distribution, the materials used, the organs or limbs depicted or the deities venerated. Thus, the production of publicity was crucial. They communicated that the deity or deities venerated in the sanctuary successfully treated problems affecting the body, at which "success" is to discuss, thus it is not true that each body part votive testifies a cure (against Ryanearson 2003). Surely the offerings were used as a kind of aretalogy praising the power of the deity honored. The extent of the god's sphere of action is not determined by the anatomical ex-votos but could be very far-reaching or rather specialized. In a second step they could be seen as "advertising media" (Haase 2003), telling success stories of effective rituals to worshippers and visitors, especially when the dedications are interpreted as thank-offerings.

It is a common trait in all case studies that biomedical cure was not the main theme in inscriptions and was not the primary theme of the body part dedications per se, even it questions in which ways health could be depicted. Only if the anatomical ex-votos are read as depictions of perfectly sound limbs or organs, both as objectives and as descriptions of the state after cure, such an interpretation could be appropriate but nothing hints to such a far-reaching hypothesis. Because divine help is urgently requested, restoration of health was not only an issue of biomedical cure but involved cultural and social concerns. It should be considered that the success of the healing ritual could consist in the performance concluded by the dedication of an anatomical ex-voto, thus reconfiguring health in a symbolic sense. The efficacy of the ritual of which the anatomical ex-votos form part, is not dependent on a biomedical state. It is obvious in Anatolian confession inscriptions that cure is seen as secondary to adjusting the relationship with the deity. Thus, dedicating a body part votive at the closure of a ritual signifies only that the desired state is reached within the valid symbol system according to the explanatory model mainly used.

The very existence of body part votives, however, allows no conclusions about how health care or fertility rituals were performed because they only attest the need for divine help. In which way this help was invoked is beyond our interpretatorial possibilities.

Guide to Further Reading

Still the best concise treatment of body part votives remains Van Straten (1981) but it is now supplemented by the articles by Turfa (2004) and Forsén (2004) in *TheSCRA*. For anatomical ex-votos in the northwestern part of the Roman Empire see (as introduction) Bauchhenß (2004). Forsén (1996) is a sound example for the analysis of one group of body part votives, discussing typology and chronology of the dedications, the question of which deities were involved and by whom they were given.

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CHAPTER 31

Monumental Inscriptions

Wolfgang Spickermann

Introduction

Votive monuments are different from other votive gifts as their purpose is not to serve as offering but rather to remember the ceremony itself (Zinser 1990). Although they can even be part of a sacrifice, they also have the purpose of indicating to gods and men a sacred action that should be remembered. These include in particular votive inscriptions, which were found in Greece from the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, in Rome from the sixth century BCE onwards, but appeared in large numbers just after the Hellenistic period, in Rome after the Imperial era. The latter is particularly true for the western Roman provinces, where the earliest religious inscriptions date to the Augustan period. For the period from 150 to 250 CE, an almost explosive increase of votive inscriptions can be recorded, particularly in the Roman provinces. This development is due to the economic prosperity of the second century CE, recognized and favored by the associated increased financial strength of greater groups of the provincial population, especially those of the veterans and their descendants. It corresponds to an "epigraphic habit", which can be observed all over the Roman world in the second and third centuries CE (MacMullen 1982). While the production of votive inscriptions in mainland Greece took a slightly different development and, during the Roman Empire, was at their peak particularly in Asia Minor, this chapter will be mainly concerned with the Latin monumental votive inscriptions, offering a series of case studies rather than generalizing comments.

The dedication of votive monuments with inscriptions in all cults was a public act of social relevance, requiring the corresponding financial strength of the donators and their need that their names be published as benefactors. It also sometimes required their adoption of the new language and culture, in short their Romanization. Thus the epigraphic element of the consecration of a votive inscription also had the purpose of documenting

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and increasing the social prestige of the donator in his or her community. Outside of Rome and the Greece mainland this was first practiced only by high officials, soldiers and members of Latinized or Hellenized provincial élites. Soon it found more and more imitators in economically strong circles, especially in the provinces. The greatest density of places where votive inscriptions are found is wherever soldiers were stationed. Even more monumental inscriptions helped the reputation of its benefactors in the army or in the civic community of a settlement.

Unlike honor and building inscriptions, which may well have considerable monumental proportions, this is not always the case for votive inscriptions. Here, the monumentality often results in the architectural context of the associated votive offering, for example, a religious building, a statue, an obelisk or a Jupiter-column. I restrict the term "monumentality" in the sense of visibility and presence to a specific context for a rather small class of monuments, of which I present selected examples below. For an archaeology of religion it is necessary to engage explicitly with the notion of expressiveness, thus stressing (unusual) options of individual communication about religion and related religious practices. For any reflection about the "reading" of these monuments, we have to keep in mind that many of the observers were illiterate. Thus, frequently not the text but the whole ensemble was in the spotlight.

The following examples have been chosen from the Roman Republic to Late Antiquity to present explicit examples of monumental dedicatory inscriptions due to their form (nos. 3, 4, 8, 9, 10), in respect of related religious buildings or cult places (nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11) and the particular circumstances of their creation (no. 6). Overlap between these groups is not excluded. Two inscriptions are bilingual (nos. 2 and 5).

Figure 31.1 Priest depicted on the left side of the central stairway leading to the temple in Niha (Lebanon). Photo by Rubina Raja.

Besides such classifications, the selection tries to document the widest possible range of dedicators: emperors (nos. 4 and 11), high-ranking senatorial and equestrian magistrates and soldiers (nos. 1, 3, and 5), municipal officials (nos. 6 and 7), peregrines (nos. 2 and partly 7), groups of merchants (no. 8) and women (nos. 9 and 10). The spectrum of the deities worshipped includes popular Roman gods (nos. 1 and 8), emperors (nos. 3, 4, 6, and 7), local and regional gods (nos. 2 and 10) and deities imported from the Eastern Mediterranean which were redistributed from Rome (nos. 5, 9, and 11). Emperor worship gave rise to several combinations. The rendering of the texts of the inscriptions follows standard conventions: Round brackets () indicate modern expansions of the abbreviation found in the original. Square brackets [] indicate modern restorations of those parts of the inscription which are no longer extant. Double square brackets [[]] indicate text, particularly names, which had been deliberately eradicated in antiquity, usually due to a damnation of a person or dynasty.

Inscriptions and Comments

(1) *CIL* 4.331 (p. 3004; 3756) = *CIL* 1.626 (p. 921) = *ILLRP* 122 (p. 319) = *ILS* 20 = *AE* 1999: 142 = *AE* 2001: 34 = *AE* 2001: 158 = *AE* 2004: 99 = 1988 Schumacher: no. 35Rome

L(ucius) Mummi(us) L(uci) f(ilius) co(n)s(ul) duct(u) / auspicio imperioque / eius Achaia capt(a) Corint(h)o / deleto Romam redieit /[5] triumphans ob hasce / res bene gestas quod / in bello voverat / hanc aedem et signu(m) / Herculius Victoris /[10] imperator dedicat

Lucius Mummius, son of Lucius, consul. Under his guidance, his auspices and his command, Achaia had been captured. After the destruction of Corinth he returned to Rome and got a triumph. Because of these successes he dedicated as victorious commander in accordance to a vow, given during the war, this temple and a statue of Hercules Victor.

Although at a first glance the 55 × 60 cm stone tablet from the Mons Caelius is not a monumental inscription, the contents on the other hand suggest a monumental context. Lucius Mummius had struck the Achaean Confederation as consul in 146 BCE at the Isthmus of Corinth and destroyed Corinth as a result of a decision of the senate (Zonaras 9.31). His paragon L. Aemilius Paulus, after his victory over Philip V in 168 BCE, as part of a round trip through of Greece visited all venerable sacrificial sites, including the temple of Zeus at Olympia as part of a "marked sacred landscape" (Strocka 1999: 18). In his overly positive representation of the behavior of the Romans the historian Polybius forgets to mention that, after the needless sacking of Epirus, the presentation of quantities of Greek sculptures and paintings on the first day of the triumph of Paulus in 167 BCE, required by itself two hundred and fifty wagons. This included an Athena of Phidias, which Paulus dedicated in his temple of Fortuna huiusque diei (Plutarch, *Aemilius* 32.33; cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 34.55). Later, Polybius gained merits for his country by getting back some of the statues that Mummius had taken away to Rome after his campaign (Polybios 39.3). Mummius himself also undertook a tour of Greece in 145 BCE. Back in Rome, he placed his temple of Hercules Victor as a counterpart to Aemilius Paulus' temple of Fortuna. He claimed the temple to have been vowed during the war. He celebrated his triumph at the end of 145 BCE and inaugurated the temple, including the cult statue, probably in 142 BCE on the Mons Caelius. As in Paulus'

temple of Fortuna, numerous pieces of the booty from various cities of Greece and carried in the triumph were on display. The inscription is thus a perfect example of the competition of prominent plebeian and patrician families of the Roman nobility in the second century BCE, which was performed with religious tools and presented itself as an expression of piety to the Roman Gods.

2) CIL X 7513 = CIL I 2225 (p. 1096) = ILLRP 158 (p. 320) = AE 1998, 663 = AE 2004, 11 = Jongelin/Kerr 2005, 56 sqq.
Sant'Antioco/Sulci, Sardinia

Himilconi Idnibalis f(ilio) / quei hanc aedem ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) fac(iendam) / coeravit Hi/ milco f(ilius) statuam [posuit]

[(l)ḥ]mlkt bn 'dnb'l bn ḥmlkt / hprṭ ***'l myṭb 'rš' hskly*** */ lbn't t hmqdš st lhrbt l'lt / ṭyn' t hm'š st bn' ḥmlkt*

For Himilco, son of Idnibal, who provided for the building of this temple in accordance to a decision of the senate. Himilco (his) son has erected this statue. (Punic version: For Himilco, son of Idnibal, the son of Himilco, who …with approbation of the senate of Sulcis to build this sanctuary for the lady, the goddess, his son Himilco erected this statue. [Transl. by Jongelin and Kerr])

The base (85 × 77 cm) from the time of Sulla or Caesar documents in a Latin and a Neo-Punic text the installation of a statue of the father Himilco, by his son with the same name, in a sanctuary which the father had erected. Father and son belong to a local peregrine family and have common Punic names. The Punic version of the inscription mentions a goddess who is not named. Both versions of the text mention an explicit decision of the senate (city council) of Sulci, which might have been the responsible authority in this case (Adams 2003: 212–3). The inscription is thus representative of valuable votives of romanized provincials, here of Punic descent, in the late Republican period. The inscription shows how a religious action, the dedication of a temple, is reflected in an honorary performance within the same religious context.

(3) *AE* 1964: 255 = *AE* 1980: 46 = *AE* 1987: 103 = *AE* 1991: 63 = *AE* 1994: 1815 = Schumacher 1988: no. 83
Al Iskandariyah / Alexandria Aegyptus?

Iussu Imp(eratoris) Caesaris divi f(ilii) / C(aius) Cornelius Cn(aei) f(ilius) Gallus / praef(ectus) fabr(um) Caesaris divi f(ilii) / forum Iulium fecit

On order of the emperor Caesar, son of a divine, Caius Cornelius Gallus, prefect of the pioneers of the son of the divine Caesar, has edified this Iulian market.

(4) *CIL* 4.882 (p. 3777; 4302; 4367) = *CIL* 4.31191 = *ILS* 115 = *AE* 1991: 63 = *AE* 2000: 18 = *AE* 2003: 267 = *AE* 2007: 207 = Schumacher 1988: no. 84 = Alföldy 1990
Rome

Divo Caesari divi Iulii f(ilio) Augusto / Ti(berio) Caesari divi Augusti f(ilio) Augusto / sacrum

Vowed for the divine Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Iulius, and Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus.

The original inscription on the famous obelisk of St Peter's Square in Rome (no. 3) is covered by a votive inscription attached later (no. 4). Whilst the second inscription is

carved, the first representative inscription was mounted with gilt bronze letters (*litterae aureae*) and can therefore only be reconstructed through the dowels. The author of the first inscription, Cornelius Gallus, is known as the first equestrian prefect of Egypt and Alexandria (30–27 BCE) and as a major poet of elegies (Dio 51.17.1; *CIL* 3.14147 = *ILS* 8995 (Philis)). Previously, even as *praefectus fabrum*, Gallus founded on the orders of the emperor C. Julius Caesar (Octavian) a Forum Iulium. It cannot be determined whether this was a market in Alexandria or a market near the city of Nicopolis/Iuliopolis. Around 27 BCE Gallus fell into disgrace for unclear reasons. Augustus revoked his friendship, Gallus was covered with processes and eventually committed suicide in 26 BCE. His memory was erased (Dio 53.23.5–24.1; Suetonius, *Augustus* 66).

Finally the emperor Caius (Caligula) transported the obelisk from Egypt to Rome and engraved a votive inscription instead of the original label (Pliny, *Natural History* 16.201; 36.74). This is dedicated to his two predecessors of whom he is demonstratively putting himself a descendant. Unlike Augustus, Tiberius was not consecrated. The sequence of inscriptions is interesting, as it points to the capacity of the medium of religious (re-) dedications for imperial propaganda.

5) AE 1966, 425 = AE 1991, 1502 = Schumacher 1988 no. 85
Ephesos, Asia

[Benef]icio Ca[esaris] / Augusti ex rediti[bus] / agrorum sacrorum / quos is Dianae de[dit] /[5] via strata Sex(to) Appul[eio] / pro co(n)s(ule)

[τ]ῆι Καίσαρος τοῦ Σεβαστο[ῦ] / [χάριτ]ι ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν προσό[δων], / [ἃ]ς αὐτὸς τῇ θεᾷ ἐχαρί[σατο], / ὁδὸς ἐστρώθη ἐπὶ ἀνθυπάτ[ου] /[5] Σέξτου Ἀπολήιου.

By the benefice of Caesar Augustus the street was paved from the income of the holy fields, which he donated to Diana, under the governorship of Sextus Appuleius

The bilingual inscription on a marble block (126 × 60 × 27 cm, letters from 4 to 4.2 cm) is, in a strict sense, not a votive but a building inscription. Sextus Appuleius was a relative of Augustus and together with him *consul ordinarius* in 29 BCE. He became proconsul of the province of Asia in 23/21 BCE. Augustus had apparently donated sacred lands to Artemis in the area of Karystos as part of his actions to restore her famous sanctuary (Strabo 14.1.26). From their proceeds the proconsul now caused the eastern part of the processional road to the great shrine, the "Street of the Curetes", to be paved The titular of the emperor in the Latin version is reproduced in accordance with the Greek original only in a much abbreviated way (Alföldy 1991). The bilingual inscription is intended to emphasize the wide-ranging significance of the Artemis cult in Ephesus, who in the Latin text is explicitly named Diana. It is the Roman esteem of this fact which is announced in monumental form.

(6) *CIL* 12.4333 (p. 845) = *ILS* 112 (p. 169) = *AE* 1964: 187 = *AE* 1980: 609 = *AE* 2007: 145 = Freis 1984: no. 15
Narbonne/Narbo, Gallia Narbonensis

(in front) *T(ito) Statilio Taur[o] / L(ucio) Cassio Longino / co(n)s(ulibus) X K(alendas) Octobr(es) / numini Augusti votum /[5] susceptum a plebe Narbo/nensium in perpetuom / quod bonum faustum felixque sit Imp(eratori) Caesari / divi f(ilio) Augusto p(atri) p(atriae) pontifici maximo*

trib(unicia) potest(ate) / XXXIIII coniugi liberis gentique eius senatui /[10] populoque Romano et colonis incolisque / c(oloniae) I(uliae) P(aternae) N(arbonensis) M(artii) qui se numini eius in perpetuum / colendo obligaverunt plebs Narbonen/sium aram Narbone in foro posuit ad /[15] quam quot annis VIIII K(alendas) Octobr(es) qua die / eum saeculi felicitas orbi terrarum / rectorem edidit tres equites Romani / a plebe et tres libertini hostias singu/las inmolent et colonis et incolis ad supplicandum numini eius thus et vinum /[20] de suo ea die praestent et VIII K(alendas) Octobr(es) / thus et vinum prae/stent K(alendis) quoque Ianuar(iis) thus et vinum / colonis et incolis praestent VII quoq(ue) / Idus Ianuar(ias) qua die primum imperium /[25] orbis terrarum auspicatus est thure / vino supplicent et hostias singul(as) in/molent et colonis incolisque thus vi/num ea die praestent et pridie K(alendas) Iunias quod ea die T(ito) Statilio /[30] Tauro M(anio) Aemilio Lepido co(n)s(ulibus) iudicia / plebis decurionibus coniunxit hostias / singul(as) inmolent et thus et vinum ad / supplicandum numini eius colonis et / incolis praestent exque iis tribus equitibus Roman[is tribusve] /[35] libertinis unu[s ---//

(on the side) *[Pleb]s Narbone(n)sis a[ram] / numinis Augusti de[di]cavit [3] / [6] / [3][5] legibus iis q(uae) i(nfra) s(criptae) s(unt) numen Caesaris Aug(usti) p(atris) p(atriae) quando tibi / hodie hanc aram dabo dedicabo/que his legibus hisque regioni/bus dabo dedicabo quas hic /[10] hodie palam dixero uti infimum / solum huiusque arae titulorum/que est si quis tergere ornare / reficere volet quod beneficii / causa fiat ius fasque esto sive / quis hostia sacrum faxit qui /[15] magmentum nec protollat id/circo tamen probe factum esto si / quis huic arae donum dare au/gereque volet liceto eademq(ue) / lex ei dono esto quae arae est /[20] ceterae leges huic arae titulisq(ue) / eadem sunto quae sunt arae / Dianae in Aventino hisce legi/bus hisque regionibus sicuti / dixi hanc tibi aram pro Imp(eratore) /[25] Caesare Aug(usto) p(atre) p(atriae) pontifice maxi/mo tribunicia potestate XXXV coniuge liberis genteque eius / senatu populoque R(omano) colonis / incolisque col(oniae) Iul(iae) Patern(ae) Narb(onensis) Mart(ii) qui se numini eius in per/petuum colendo obligaverunt /[30] doque dedicoque uti sies volens / propitium*

Under the consulate of Titus Statilius Taurus and Lucius Cassius Longinus on the 10th day before the calends of October the plebs of Narbo gave an eternal vow for the divine power of Augustus. "This should be good, favorable and lucky for the Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of a divine, father of the fatherland, pontifex maximus, owner of the tribunicial power for the 34th time, for his wife and his children and his gens, the senate and the people of Rome and the colonists and inhabitants of the Colonia Iulia Paterna Narbo Martius, who have committed themselves for the worship of his divine power for eternity. The Narbonensian plebs erected this altar in Narbo on the market, so that every year on the 9th day before the calends of October (September 23), the day when the fortune of the spirit of this age has born the ruler of the globe, each of three Roman knights from the plebs and three freedmen have to sacrifice an animal and have to pay from their own money to the colonists and inhabitants for incense and wine for prayers to His divine power on this day; and on the 8th day before the calends of October (September 24) they also have to pay incense and wine for the colonists and inhabitants; also on the calends of January (January 1) they also have to pay incense and wine for the colonists and inhabitants; also on the 7th day before the Ides of January (January 7) the day on which He has gotten the emperorship over the whole globe, they have to give prayers with incense and wine and each of them has to sacrifice an animal and to pay incense and wine for the colonists and inhabitants. On the day before the calends of June (May 31) each of them has to sacrifice an animal and to pay incense and wine for the colonists and inhabitants for prayers on his divine power, because on this day under the consulate of Titus Statilius Taurus and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. He reconciled the judgements of the plebs with that of the decurions. From that three Roman knights and freedmen should one …"

The [pleb]s of Narbo vowed this altar to the divine power of Augustus [[---]] according to the statutes mentioned below: "O, divine power of Caesar Augustus, father of the fatherland! Because

I will now give and dedicate to you this altar, I will give and dedicate it according to the statutes, which I now proclaim in public and with the boundaries which are represented by the fundament of the altar and the inscriptions. If someone wants to clean, ornate or repair this altar and do that in order of his gratitude, this should be permitted. If someone sacrifices an animal without immolating the entrails, this should be well done. If someone gives a donation to this altar to increase his reputation, this should be permitted and the same statutes are valid for the donation as for a sacrifice. The other statutes for this altar should be the same as for the altar of Diana on the Aventine. Under this statutes and boundaries, as I have proclaimed them, for the emperor Caesar Augustus, father of the fatherland, pontifex maximus, owner of the tribunicial power for the 35th time, for his wife and his children and his gens, the senate and the people of Rome and the colonists and inhabitants of the Colonia Iulia Paterna Narbo Martius, who have committed themselves for the worship of his divine power for eternity, I give and dedicate this altar so you voted favourably and convenient."

The inscription is attached on the front and side of a marble altar (110 × 58 × 29 cm; letters from 1.7 to 4.6 cm). It is one of the first pieces of evidence of the worship of a living emperor in the provinces. Here the inhabitants of Narbo (*plebs Narbonensium)* committed themselves to an ongoing cult of the "Divine will" (*numen*) of the emperor, which had to be performed by a community of three Roman knights and three freedmen (Nicolet 1963). The text is also to be understood as a testimony of the founding act of the *seviri Augustales* of *Narbo* (Kneißl 1980). The importance of the altar results from the fact that it was the prototype for all other dedications to the Numen Augusti in the western provinces. Rituals and sacrifices for specific days are determined: the birthday of Augustus on 23 September, also 24 September, 1 January, and 7 January, the day of the first acceptance of the symbols of power by Augustus, and a local feast of emperor worship on 31 May, when Augustus had apparently decided a dispute between the *plebs* and the *decuriones* in favor of the *plebs* (Herz 1978: 1148). According to the inscription on the right side of the altar even in other times sacrifices and donations should be allowed. Monumentality is a consequence of the importance given to the incipient emperor worship in the Roman west.

(7) *CIL* 13.1642 = *ILS* 5639 = *AE* 1888: 86 = Schumacher 1988: no. 42
Feurs/Forum Segusiavorum, Lugudunensis

Divo Augusto sacrum / pro salute Ti(beri) Claudi / Caesaris August(i) Germ(anici) / Ti(berius) Claudius Arucae fil(ius) Capito /5 sacerdos Aug(usti) theatrum quod / Lupus Anthi f(ilius) ligneum posuerat / d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) lapideum restituit

Vowed to the divine Augustus for the health of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Germanicus! Tiberius Claudius, son of Aruca, Capito, as priest of Augustus has restored in stone the theater, which Lupus, son of Anthus, had built in wood, at his own expense.

The inscription on a limestone table from the theater of *Forum Segusiavorum*, the capital of the *civitas Segusiavorum* in the Rhône valley, documents the monumental rebuilding of the wooden theater in stone by a priest of the imperial cult. He vows the considerable amount implied to the deified Augustus for the health of the reigning emperor Claudius. Thus the theater is directly connected with the cult of the emperor, as in the Helvetian colonies Augst and Avenches which also attest theaters built in stone in combination with temples of the imperial cult, linked by a procession road (Spickermann

2003: 94–5, 151–8). Whilst in places the inscriptions have been lost, the archaeological context is lacking in Feurs. There are many indications that in the three Gallic provinces the expansion of the capitals of the *civitates*, associated with new imperial cult centers, had already begun in the Claudian period. The theater in Feurs is a good example for that. According to his filiation the donator is a member of one of the leading families of the Segusiavii, who had received Roman citizenship shortly before. His father still has a Celtic name. Also the form of the name of the donator of the preceding theater, Lupus, Anthi filius, is provincial without Roman citizenship.

(8) *CIL* 13.11806 = *ILS* 9235 (p. 192) = *AE* 1906: 53 = *AE* 1907: 67 = *AE* 1980: 655 = Mainz/Mogontiacum, Germania superior

(in front) *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / pro [sa]l[ute] [[Nero]]/[[nis]] Clau[d]i Cae/saris Au[g(usti)] Imp(eratoris) /[5] canaba[rii] pub[li]ce / P(ublio) Sulpicio Scribonio / Proculo leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) [p]r(aetore) / cura et impensa / Q(uinti) Iuli Prisci et /[10] Q(uinti) Iuli Aucti //*

(on the side) *[Samus] et Severus Venicari f(ilii) / sculpserunt //*

(in front) For Iupiter the best and greatest for the health of the emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus! The inhabitants of the canabae in public under the governorship of Publius Sulpicius Scribonius Proculus under the care and expense of Quintus Iulius Priscus and Quintus Iulius Auctus.

(on the side) Samus and Severus, sons of Venicarus, have carved it.

The inscription is attached on the so-called Great Iupiter column from Mainz. H. U. Instinsky had already associated a dedication of a group of Remi for their main god Mars Camulus for the health of the emperor Nero, probably from Xanten (*CIL* 13.8701), with this monument. By now, another altar for the health of Nero vowed by a group of Lingones for their main god Mars Cicollos is also known from Xanten (*AE* 1981: 690). Along with the Great Iupiter column they are the earliest evidence of the use of *pro salute imperatoris* formula in the German provinces (Instinsky 1959). Originally, the column was crowned with a bronze statue of Jupiter. It is decorated with the reliefs of many deities, which still could not all be interpreted unambiguously (Bauchhenß 1984). Q. Iulius Priscus and Q. Iulius Auctus who took care of the erection of the column also donated the affiliated votive altar (*CIL* 13.11807). Dimesser Ort, where the column was found, was the place of the Roman port and a merchants' settlement. In terms of rituals, objects, and financing, this public consecration of an altar and a column to the highest Roman god for the health of the emperor corresponds to the dedications of the Remi and the Lingones at Xanten mentioned above (Warmington 1969: 121). At Mainz, however, the inhabitants of the suburb of the legionary camp (*canabarii*) were not locals who dedicated to their indigenous tutelary deities, but people of different origins. Thus, there is no reference to a tribal god like that of the Remi and the Lingones. Nevertheless, the *canabarii* appear as a quasi-municipal association with two speakers, who contributed to the costs and design of the impressive votive offering. All of the three consecrations had apparently the same reason. The governorship of P. Sulpicius Scribonius Proculus is set in the period from 63 to 67 CE so that the Pisonian conspiracy of 65 must have been the occasion why the ensemble was built. The monumental

dimension of the dedication could have served as camouflage for the governor participating in the conspiracy (Eck 1985: 127). Despite its peculiar motivation, the column became popular as a model for more than a thousand adaptations.

(9) *CIL* 13.504 = Fabre and Sillières 2000: no. 3.
Lectoure/Lactora, Aquitania

Matri Deum / Pomp(eia) Philumene / quae prima L<a=E>ctor(a)e / taurobolium / fecit.
18.10.176?

For the Mother of the Gods! Pompeia Philumenae, who has celebrated the first taurobolium of Lectoure.

This altar and its inscription present an often-found methodological problem, as they are known from literary sources only. The inscription can, however, be interpreted on the basis of a number of large altars referring to *taurobalia* (a ritual which must have involved the killing of a bull) from Lectoure, mostly from female donators. The larger part of the altars found in Lectoure in Aquitania commemorate *taurobolia*, most are precisely dated, noting not only the year but also the very day on which they were set up. In accordance with these dates, two groups can be established: five dated to October 18, 176 CE, and nine dated to December 8, 241 CE. One altar is dated to March 24, 239 CE (*CIL* 13.510). Others may belong to either the first or the second phase. Our altar mentions the first *taurobolium* in Lectoure which must then have taken place on or before October 18, 176 CE (Rutter 1968: 236–8). It seems that this day saw the official institutionalization of the taurobolic ceremony within the Mater Magna/Cybele cult in *Lactora*. This seems to have happened in conjunction with the imperial cult, since an inscription to honor the emperor Marcus Aurelius can be dated to the same year, and a second inscription to Diva Faustina must have been put up simultaneously (*CIL* 13.526 = Fabre and Sillières 2000: no. 25). Etienne (1966) assumes that the inscription was put up in connection with the death and divinization of Faustina (1966: 37–40). It is, however, interesting that another *taurobolium* in Lyon dates to December 9 (of the same year? = *CIL* 13.1751). We may be dealing with a hitherto unknown regional holiday of the cult. A *taurobolium* altar of the council of *Lactora* in honor of Gordian, Sabinia Tranquillina and the imperial house, dates to December 8, 241 CE and was performed for the welfare of the town. The cult must have held considerable appeal for the local population, since the *r(es) p(ublica) Lactorat(ium)* also put up another *taurobolium* altar for the health and the safety of the divine house, thus marking it out as addressing the living members of the imperial house. The ornaments of the altar and the formula *tauropolium fecit* date the *taurobolium* to the second century CE, maybe even to 176 CE. This dedication by the political community connects the Magna Mater/Cybele cult to the imperial cult (Duthoy 1969: 69, 116–21; Rutter 1968: 236). The monumental form publicly expresses the personal importance of the ritual for individuals, women, who do not have many other occasions to establish a lasting public presence. At Lectoure, this public presence seems to have asked for further reasons beyond the personal ritual. As a result, the ritual is given an additional public religious dimension. For the popularity of the Magna Mater cult in Rome also among Roman aristocrats, see, for example *CIL* 14.2790, Gabiae).

(10) *CIL* 13.2532 = *ILS* 4538
Culoz. Gallia Lugdunensis

N(uminibus) Aug(ustorum) / deo Mar/ti Segom/oni Dun/ᶜati Cassi/a Satur/nina ex voto / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).

For the divine power of the Augusti (and) Mars Segomo Dunas! Cassia Saturnina as a votive in fulfilling her vow gladly and deservedly.

The inscription is attached on a big pillar altar (2.75 × 0.60 m) and can be dated to the end of the second or beginning of the third century CE. The pillar was situated on the summit of Mount Jugeon, a five-hundred meter-high cliff. Thévenot (1995) argues that, given the dimensions, the stone supported a statue of Mars. The image of a flash is visible on the upper part of the monument.

Mars Segomo was the main god of *civitas* of the Sequani and had his most important sanctuary in Villars d'Heria. In addition, some votive inscriptions for him have been found outside the area of the Sequani, such as this one in the area of the Ambarri (Spickermann 2003: 180–4). The monument of Cassia Saturnina differs from the other dedications in that the god has another epithet, which must have been called Dunas or Dunatis. This epithet is testified again for Mars Bolvinus from Bouchy (*CIL* 13.2899 = *ILS* 4547). Dunas can be derived from the Celtic *dunum*, which means something like "high mountain, hill" (Thevenot 1955: 53).

It is remarkable that a woman donates such an exclusive and highly-visible votive monument to a Gallo-Roman god, and connects this by the simultaneous addressing of the Numina Augustorum to the imperial cult. This probably explains the fact that the donator belonged to a wealthy and romanized Sequanic family. She built the monumental votive for her tribal god at a remote location in the neighboring area of the Ambarri. Monumentality and religious actions allow for a marked presence – socially as well as religiously – beyond the usual perimeter of presence. The redundancy in the consecration formula, mentioning the votive act two times, shows that she has paid no great attention to the quality of the text or did not understand the actual wording of the abbreviation.

(11) *CIL* 3.4413 (p. 2328, 32) = Krüger 1970: no. 176 = *ILS* 659 = *CIMRM* 2.1698 = Schumacher 1988: no. 67 = *AE* 2005: 44 = *AE* 2009: 100
Petronell-Carnuntum / Carnuntum, Pannonia superior

D(eo) S(oli) I(nvicto) M(ithrae) / fautori imperii sui / Iovii et Herculii / religiosissimi /ᶜ Augusti et Caesares / sacrarium / restituerunt

For the invincible God of the Sun Mithras, for the protector of their reign! The Iovii and Herculii, the most religious Augusti and Caesars have restored his temple.

The large altar (150 × 87 × 65 cm), which carries on its sides the images of Cautes and Cautopates, is in many respects an important historical document. In autumn 308 CE the Roman emperors met in Carnuntum on the initiative of the Augustus Galerius under the presidency of the 305 CE retired senior Augustus Diocletian, due to the difficulties in the tetrarchy after the sudden Constantius Chlorus. As the result of this so-called imperial conference Licinius had been appointed as Augustus by Galerius on November 11

without a previous Caesarship; Maximinus Daia remained Caesar in the East, and Constantine, who had been proclaimed as Augustus by the troops of his defunct father in 306 CE, was at least confirmed as Caesar. Maxentius, son of the other senior Augustus, Maximian, went from empty (Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 29.2; Zosimos, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.10–1). This so-called "Third tetrarchy" renewed during this conference a mithraeum in Carnuntum and documented this on a representative altar. In the given pagan ideology under the reign of Diocletian he also calls himself, his successor, Galerius, the Caesar Maximinus Daia and the new Augustus Licinius as the new offspring of Jupiter (Iovii) (cf. *CIL* 9.6026 = *ILS* 676). Maximianus as *senior Augustus* and Constantine were progenies of Hercules (Herculii). It is noteworthy that the emperors who pursued at this time, especially in the east of the empire of solid Christian communities, demonstratively renovated a local mithraeum. This demonstrates the importance of Sol Invictus Mithras who is singled out as a protector of the rule of the Iovii and the Herculii not only in Carnuntum. Regardless of Mithraic groups, Sol

Figure 31.2 Assemblage of honorific statue-monuments in Herculaneum, Italy, honoring the Augustan proconsul M. Nonius Balbus. Photo by Jörg Rüpke.

Invictus also enjoyed a great veneration since the second half of the third century CE and was at least favored as the patron god of Constantine until 312 CE. This monumental altar is one of the most important religious testimonies of imperial propaganda in the time of the tetrarchs.

Conclusion

These eleven examples of "monumental inscriptions" show that the dedication of this kind of votive monuments from the Roman Republic to Late Antiquity had not only religious reasons but were also public acts of highly political and/or social relevance. Monumental religious inscriptions were used by Roman emperors for the purpose of imperial propaganda as well by private persons to increase their own social prestige or that of their families. On the other hand, there should have also been a personal piety of the donators which is rarely documented in the inscriptions explicitly. The given examples have also to be seen as documentations of expensive religious ceremonies (for example the inauguration of a religious building, a big sacrifice or kinds of public games) and as an honorary performance of the donators. Here, we can distinctly see that the boundaries between religious and secular fields in antiquity are usually fluent.

Guide to Further Reading

Good and illustrated introductions in Latin epigraphy are offered by Gordon (1983) and Schmidt (2011). For the Greek epigraphy, which is not treated in this chapter, Cook (1990), Keppie (1991), and McLean (2006) give very readable introductions for further studies. The methods of historical interpretation of inscriptions are presented by Bodel (2001). The combination of monument and inscription and the concept of monumentality are treated in Newby (2007).

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PART VIII

Agents

CHAPTER 32

Material Culture and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity

Eric Rebillard

Introduction

"The confidence that a discernibly 'Christian' material culture exists and can be archaeologically defined has been challenged by a series of new studies that question the degree to which religious affiliation is reflected in the material record, and highlight the amorphous and misleading quality of pagan/Jewish/Christian categorization." Such is the statement made by Kim Bowes in her recent review of the state of the field of early Christian archaeology (2008: 575). In this chapter, I want to question further the link between material culture and religious identity. To this end, I will start by proposing a set of theoretical considerations that can help formulate the question on better grounds by situating religious identity within the "plural actor". Then, I will analyze some of the failings of the traditional approaches, particularly within "Christian" archaeology, in order to suggest a new set of questions.

Beyond "Groupism" and towards a Theory of the "Plural Actor"

"It is now axiomatic that our identities are fluid and mutable, under negotiation as we experience life, and open to manipulation if we have the opportunity." So Lynn Meskell wrote in 2001 in a paper in which she tried to set new agendas for an archaeology of identity (2001: 196; see also Meskell and Preucel 2004: 122–3). What she had in mind are the binary oppositions so characteristic of the Western taxonimizing habit: heterosexual/homosexual, male/female, élite/non-élite, etc. Indeed, the blurring of these categories, to which we could add in our field pagan/Christian, Jewish/Christian, and so on, is now a cliché. However, Meskell also posits a third-wave feminist agenda to

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"break the boundaries of the identity categories themselves," by which she means that gendered identities cannot be studied in isolation and that other factors need to be interpolated such as age, race, class, and so on. In other words, and to transpose the question for our field of enquiry, it is not enough to say that the categories pagan, Jewish and Christian are fluid. We also need to study religious identity in relation to other sets of identity categories. In order to do so, I suggest to combine three sets of theoretical considerations: the criticism by Rogers Brubaker (2002) of "groupism;" the program devised by Bernard Lahire of "a sociology at the level of the individual;" and the vocabulary provided by identity theory for understanding the handling of multiple identities.

It has been an important advance in scholarship to study the interactions of religious groups and to abandon their study in isolation from each other (see the pioneering volume Lieu, North, and Rajak 1992). However, this approach runs the risk of reifying these groups, despite the common postmodern cliché that understands their boundaries as contingent and fluctuating. This results in what Rogers Brubaker calls "the unhappy marriage of clichéd constructivism and engrained groupism" (Brubaker et al. 2006: 8), that is, a discourse that talks about the fluidity of identities at the same time as it reifies identities by attributing them to groups together with agency, interests, and will.

Brubaker defines "groupism" as "the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (2002: 164). He invites us to avoid starting our analysis with groups, and to focus instead on "the processes through which categories are used by individuals to make sense of the social world" (170). Brubaker also suggests that we consider "groupness" – an event that can succeed but also fail, and, even when successful, is in most cases just a passing moment. Doing so, we come up with a new set of questions. Instead of assuming religious groups as a given, we now wonder about the group-making processes. Instead of attributing agency to groups, we now can ask what things people do with the categories and how they articulate them in their own understanding of the social world.

This strong invitation to abandon groups as our basic unit of social analysis resonates with the program of sociologist Bernard Lahire to promote "a sociology at the level of the individual" and to develop a theory of the "plural actor" (2003; 2011). Lahire invites us to abandon the "homogenizing perspective on individuals in society", which is dominant in the social sciences, for "a more complex vision of the individual as being less unified and as the bearer of heterogeneous habits, schemes, or dispositions which may be contrary or even contradictory to one another" (Lahire 2003: 344). This leads him to introduce the notion of the internal plurality of individuals and to propose a theory of the "plural actor" (Lahire 2011). He also calls for taking into consideration the multiple contexts of action while most sociologists study how individuals act within a specific arena.

Thus the program of a sociology at the level of the individual is to "identify the internal plurality of individuals and the way it acts and 'distributes' itself according to various social contexts" (Lahire 2003: 346). He concludes with a new understanding of social agents:

> "Social agents are not made all of one piece; *they are fit together from separate parts, complex charts of dispositions to act and to believe which are more or less tightly constituted*. This does

> not mean that they 'lack coherence', but that they lack a principle of unique coherence—of *beliefs, i.e., models, norms, ideals, values, and of dispositions of act*" (348, his emphasis).

Lahire's theory of the "plural actor" is a good reminder, especially in the context of archaeology where the Durkheimian model is so prominent, that people often live through multiple identities that can be activated both simultaneously and successively and sometimes carry contradictory experiences and expectations.

Since at least William James, it is a common idea that individuals have multiple identities – selves in James' terms –but the relationship between and among identities have seldom been theorized. Identity theory (McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker 1980; Burke and Stets 2009), despite a quantitative approach that seems to make it ill-suited for historians and archaeologists, can provide us with some basic terms and definitions.

For identity theory, "an identity is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person" (Burke and Stets 2009: 3). The salience of an identity is its probability of being activated in a situation (134). Activation refers to the condition in which an identity is actively engaged as opposed to being latent and inactive (77). Identity theory also considers the conditions in which multiple identities can be simultaneously activated. Burke (2003) distinguishes multiple identities within a single group and in intersecting groups (see also Burke and Stets 2009: 140–1). Within a single group, a person can have several identities such as father and son in an extended family group; or a person has an activated identity in one group when something in the situation activates an identity that the person has in another group (Burke 2003: 201). Multiple identities in intersecting groups is the situation when different groups in which the person has different identities overlap (202).

Because of the nature of the evidence, an archaeology of identities usually focuses on identities based on category or group memberships such as ethnicity, religion, or occupation. Each category membership can be described as a family or a set of contrastive categories in a given culture. In the religious set, in our case, we find, among others: pagan, Jewish, and Christian. Two types of arrangement of category membership sets, lateral and hierarchical, are distinguished by anthropologist Handelman:

> "Given a lateral arrangement, the assumption is that various category sets (i.e. ethnic, occupational, religious, educational, etc.) are interchangeable to a certain extent in an occasion of interaction; and therefore, that the same person can be categorized according to different criteria of relevance in different situations. But if the arrangement of membership sets tends more to the hierarchical, then all categorizations about a person may be allocated according to, and interpreted in terms of, membership in a given category set" (Handelman 1977: 192–3).

In an hierarchical arrangement, if religious membership is given salience, the entirety of an individual's behavior should be determined and interpreted in terms of his or her religious affiliation. In a lateral arrangement, situational selection is key, and different category membership sets can be activated according to the context of the interaction. We will need to keep in mind that both arrangements are possible when we try to identify the religion of individuals or groups through material culture.

These theoretical considerations provide us with a framework within which archaeology can approach religious identities on solid grounds. Not only are religious identities fluid, i.e., the boundaries between the different categories are permeable, but they are not necessarily activated in a given context, even when available. Not only can the activation of religious identity vary from one individual to another within one group, but it can enter into conflict with other identity sets. The understanding of identities in terms of category memberships may seem to imply a mechanistic process, poorly compatible with the idea that identity is "not *expressed through* but *constituted by* social discourse" (Whitmarsh 2001: 31, his emphasis). First, it should be noted that we talk about the multiple identities (plural) of an individual: their combination and/or their variable activation might be said to constitute his or her identity (singular). Second, we adopt the point of view of the individuals instead of focusing on texts or artifacts: it is because individuals have multiple identities that do or do not intersect that the texts or artifacts they produce and/or use pose so many issues for the identification of their religion. Both types of analysis are therefore compatible, and even complementary. I will now consider some of the consequences of these theoretical considerations for our object of enquiry: religious affiliation and material culture within the field of early Christian archaeology.

Religion and its Material Signatures

A traditional concern of archaeology has been to identify the religion of individuals or groups in order to measure religious change. Typically Christian archaeology attempted to establish the religious affiliation of the deceased (pagan or Christian) from grave orientation, grave goods, and body orientation (see also Chapter 18). The use of such simplistic criteria is clearly out of fashion. To give just one example, what was deemed to be a choice of orientation (head to the west so that in a standing position the deceased would face east) could be in fact the simple consequence of topographical alignment (see Rahtz 1978). However, scholars have not renounced looking for the material signature of a religion.

Because continuity of Christian tradition is lacking in medieval Britain, unusual sophistication has been deployed there to identify Christian cemeteries from the Roman period. There are two sides in an issue still debated (see recently Sparey-Green 2003). Charles Thomas adopts a rather cautious approach and maps only Poundbury 3 and Lankhills feature 6 as Christian cemeteries (1981: 237). Similarly, Robert Philpott dismisses the possibility of distinguishing between pagan and Christian burials (1991: 239–40). On the other side, Christopher Sparey-Green defends the identification as Christians of gypsum plaster burials (1977; 2003). Within a broader perspective, Dorothy Watts proposes a list of thirteen Christian cemeteries (1991: 89). In addition to the presence of neo-natal burials, which she considers as "a reliable guide to the identification of Christian cemeteries" (51), she ranks the traditional criteria (orientation, supine and extended position, absence of grave goods, etc.) and applies them to about thirty cemeteries.

There are many problems with such an approach. The most obvious is that several criteria are weighted on the basis of the teachings of Christ and the early Church. For instance, Watts concludes from a handful of texts supposedly reflecting Christ's care for the young that "it can, therefore, readily be accepted that Christian concern for the

living infant … would extend, at death, to the careful interment of his body" (49). There is no need to discuss at length the weakness of such an assumption. It supposes some straightforward and direct link between the sayings of Jesus, the teachings of the early Church, and the behavior of Christians.

Even Watts' appraisal of the presence of two concurrent patterns of burial practices in the same locality is tainted by the assumption that there was "a tradition of separate Christian cemeteries" (64). Yet this tradition is not as well established as was once thought (Johnson 1997; Rebillard 2009; Bodel 2008). In any case, the criterion is applicable to only four sites in Great Britain (Watts 1991: 64–5) and there is no archaeological evidence that the adoption of a different burial pattern is due to a different religious affiliation.

More generally, any attempt to identify the signature of a religion in material culture presupposes that it can then be used as a prediction tool. It means that traits that have been identified as characteristic of a few members of a group are deemed to be valid indicators for the identification of other members of the same group in a different context. This is an obvious case of "groupism". Thus, the search for a material signature of religion is highly problematic and should definitively be abandoned when it is conceived as a tool for predicting the religious affiliation of individuals and even groups.

It does not mean that material culture cannot be used by religious groups to affirm their identity. Indeed, as Jaś Elsner has suggested for the imperial Roman religions, "a given religion was not so much an identity to be conferred on believers as an identity to be claimed and competitively redefined by different groups of adherents" (2003: 127). From such a perspective, a given artifact is not in itself an element of the signature of a religion and the same artifact can even be used by different religious groups. What matters is to determine the "complex mixture of structural rejections of the particular forms favored by the others" (126).

Instead of looking for *the* "material signature" of a religion we therefore need to look for elements of material culture that a given religion at a given time uses to differentiate itself from other religions. A given religion can thus have a variety of material signatures over time and space.

Group Identity and Religious Individuality

One of the most common approaches to the archaeology of religions is to look, as David Edwards points out in a study on Christianity and Islam in Nubia, "for those aspects of the material world which most closely embody these religions" (1999: 94). In the case of early Christian archaeology, the focus naturally falls on religious architecture, in particular churches and baptisteries, and on religious art, above all the representations of Christ and biblical scenes. However, "their relevance to the world around them" (ibid.) is largely ignored and it becomes difficult to address religious change beyond the surface.

In an analogous way, the strategy that consists of studying "Christian burial" can only and in a way pre-emptively lead to focus on exclusively Christian places of burial. Thus, Ann Marie Yasin tries to establish that a dramatic change occurred in the ways Christians bury and commemorate the dead with the shift from household monuments to collective burial within basilicas (2009: 46–100). However, burials that conform to this new model

are only a tiny minority of all burials of Christians. As Yasin herself is well aware, most tombs within basilicas belong to members of the clergy and to a few privileged individuals (91–7). Although little archaeological evidence is available for the tombs of ordinary Christians, there is no doubt that most Christians continue to bury and commemorate their dead in "household monuments". The argument is strikingly circular, focusing on places because of their religious associations and then drawing conclusions about their role in defining religious identity.

It also leads to "conceptualize individuals' religions as little versions of some institutional model," an attitude that Meredith M. McGuire denounced more generally in her recent book on "lived religion" (2008: 185). It is quite clear that the Christian clergy used burial to construct a Christian identity, but it was far from being the case that religious identity was the salient identity for all Christians when it came to choosing a place of burial (Rebillard 2004). That is why to affirm, as does Ramsay MacMullen in a provocative statement, that "for hundreds of years, the *pagan* cult of the dead was a common part of Christianity" (1997: 111, my emphasis) is hardly more satisfying. MacMullen insists that Christianity cannot be reduced to the religion defined by the bishops, which is a rejoinder to what McGuire says about lived religion. However, when he qualifies the cult of the dead as pagan, he assumes its relevance to the arena of religion, while it seems instead that the tomb is primarily relevant to family identity and is not necessarily a locus of affirmation of religious affiliation (Rebillard 2009).

The case of Jews in the Diaspora is worth mentioning in this context. Whilst it has been traditionally assumed that Jews were buried exclusively with other Jews (see an authoritative statement in Juster 1914: 480), it is now clear that this was not necessarily the case (Williams 1994; Noy 1998). Moreover, in the case of Jews, family membership might explain their being buried together better than their common religion. Indeed, for Jews, there is no conflict between burial with the family and burial among co-religionists (I am aware that many scholars do not even consider that Judaism is a "religion" until at least mid-third century; see Mason 2007; Boyarin 2009).

This shows how careful one must be when deciding which elements of the material world do characterize a religion and reminds us that room must be made for religious individuality that does not necessarily conform to the model promoted by the religious institution.

Religious Identity in Everyday Life

An important distinction hinted at in my theoretical considerations is the distinction between the availability of a religious identity and its activation. In this section, I will illustrate its interest for an archaeology of identity through the case study of the attempts made by Christian archaeology to identify material evidence for Donatism in North Africa.

As it is well known, there were two competing churches in fourth- and fifth-century North Africa: the Catholics and the Donatists (Frend 1952; Shaw 2011). In order to map the distribution of the two churches, scholars have tried to determine criteria that would allow the identification of their respective buildings. Thus Frend compares the locations of bishoprics attested at the Conference of 411 CE with the results of excavations. He depends heavily on André Berthier's archaeological investigations in central

Numidia (Berthier 1942). Frend accepts without much discussion Berthier's conclusions on the Donatist character of most of the excavated churches whether based on the presence of *Deo Laudes* in related inscriptions or on that of installations for the cult of martyrs and relics (Frend 1952: 53–5). The weaknesses of these conclusions have been pointed out many times (Lancel 1972: 156, n. 2) and it would be easy to ridicule the confidence of Berthier in 1942 and Frend in 1952 in their ability to identify Donatist basilicas in Numidia, the traditional stronghold of the Donatists.

According to the recent survey of Anne Michel (2005), only twenty-two churches of the ecclesiastical province of Numidia can be securely dated to the time of Augustine and she considers two of them as *possibly* Donatist. The first one is located at Ksar el Kelb (probably the ancient Vegesela; see Lancel 1991: 1518, Vegesela no. 1). At the end of the south aisle of the church there is a *mensa* with an inscription that reads: *Memoria domni Marchuli* (Duval 1982: 158–60, no. 75; Gui, Duval, and Caillet 1992: 291–4). The identification of Marculus with the Donatist martyr (Mandouze 1982: 696–7) who was executed in 347 is debated and in any case is unverifiable (Duval 1982: 160).

The second is one of the eleven churches excavated at Thamugadi (Timgad, Algeria; Gui, Duval, and Caillet 1992: 274–8, church no. 7). Evidence for the identification of the basilica as the "Donatist Cathedral" comes from an adjacent house in which was found an inscription with the mention of a *sacerdos Dei Optatus*, in whom scholars want to recognize the famous Donatist bishop (Mandouze 1982: 797–801, no. 2). Moreover, Henri-Irénée Marrou thought he had identified a material feature characteristic of Donatists in the basilica (1949). In the nave, a privileged area contains a sarcophagus whose sole cover is visible above ground. The cover is bored with an opening in the shape of a funnel, located directly above the mouth of the deceased. In the funnel there was a bronze sieve (Marrou 1949: 194 and pl. 7). According to Marrou, this installation, which can only be interpreted as a libation conduit, designates the building as Donatist. He argues that Augustine, who complains frequently about Catholics following the traditional commemorative rites, never denounces such a characteristically pagan behavior and that therefore the Donatists are better candidates (201–2). The argument is hardly convincing as Augustine cannot be considered as an objective source on the behaviors of Catholics and Donatists. The identity of Optatus is also difficult to decide: Optatus is a common name in North Africa and *sacerdos* can also be used of presbyters (Gui, Duval, and Caillet 1992: 275–6).

As we can see, the identification of Donatist churches rests on very fragile elements, especially as there is no archaeological evidence that would allow us to distinguish these churches from Catholic ones. According to Michel, the layout of the basilicas, the liturgical settings (when it is documented), and even the installations for the cult of the martyrs do not present any significant difference that would allow the identification of the religious affiliation of the Christians using the different North African basilicas (2005: 203; also Shaw 2011: 840–1 on the absence of archaeological record of the Circumcellions). This should not come as a surprise: after all, the debate between Catholics and Donatists is mainly about issues of ecclesiastical discipline. In particular, we do not hear about any difference in the celebration of the cult that would generate some distinctive liturgical settings.

An "archaeology of heresy", as it has been practiced in the tradition of Christian archaeology, pre-supposes that theological disagreements will translate directly into

material culture. Such a view is very similar to what Ian Morris denounced twenty years ago as "direct" or "linguistic" interpretations of symbolism (1992: 17–21). In other words, we should reject any one-to-one association which attributes a given meaning to a given artefact on the sole authority of a text. The example of the Donatists also shows that internal divisions among Christians do not necessarily leave an archaeological record: basilicas, artefacts, and inscriptions cannot easily be distributed among Catholic and Donatist Christians (and, in this case, the issue is clearly not the amount of preserved or excavated evidence). It invites us, therefore, to consider a possible divorce between the importance of religious divisions in the discourse of ecclesiastical authorities and the experience of religious divisions in everyday life (see Brubaker et al. 2006 for a similar "disjuncture" related to ethnicity and nationhood). It also points to the fact that a "Donatist" or a "Catholic" identity, if at all available, was not necessarily activated and that therefore it was not given constant salience. This fundamental characteristic of religious identity (and for that matter of every other category membership), i.e., its intermittency, is a strong caution against looking for straightforward markers of religious affiliation in material culture.

What this suggests is that, rather than trying to identify the religion of individuals and groups through material culture, we study when individuals activate their religious identity. Instead of seeking to identify religious affiliations, we need to understand the processes of religious self-identification. Material culture can provide a body of evidence more closely related to the everyday social experience of individuals than texts usually do (if we leave aside a few narrative sources). Thus, an archaeology of "lived religion" should try to understand when religion matters in everyday life and to look for contexts in which religion might be at work.

Guide to Further Reading

Bowes (2008) provides a critical review of early Christian archaeology. Humphries (2008) and Brandt (2009) raise comparable issues. Rebillard (2012) develops the approach proposed here for Christians in North Africa, 200–450 CE. For a series of case studies proposing a similar approach for other sets of category memberships, see Conlin Casella and Fowler (2005).

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CHAPTER 33

Individual Choices and Individuality in the Archaeology of Ancient Religion

Jörg Rüpke

Individuals in Ancient and Modern Religions

What does archaeological evidence stand for in Archaeology of religion? Is it a trace of and does it help to reconstruct a bygone religious system, a shared system of symbols and meaning, a religious tradition? While this has been seen as the approach usually taken in Archaeology of religion (e.g., Insoll 2001, 2004, 2011; Whitehouse and Laidlaw 2004; Whitehouse and Martin 2004; Droogan 2013; Fogelin 2008; Kyriakidis 2007), recent developments in research on ancient religion suggest to bring the individual rather than the community into the center of religion. This could start from the notion of individual religious practices (Van Andringa and Lepetz 2006), the self and personhood (Fowler 2004; Brakke, Satlow, and Weitzman 2005; Rüpke and Woolf 2013), from rationalization (Rüpke 2012) or simply individuality (Rüpke and Spickermann 2012; Rüpke 2013a). For the purposes of this Companion, I suggest starting from the latter notion. It is the one which demarks the sharpest contrast to approaches towards ancient religion as public, civic, polis, or (more outdated) state religion. It is also the one which has drawn the sharpest criticism as being entirely anachronistic and unsuitable for the study of pre-modern religion (see Scheid 2013). These issues will be dealt with in order to line up fields of fruitful research for ancient Mediterranean religions.

In religious studies it seems to have become a matter of course not to look at religion only from the observation point of religious communities and religious traditions but also from the viewpoint of an individual. This is true in two respects (Krech 2011: 163):

1. Today, religion seems to have become primarily the business of individuals who shape their personal religiosity (some say "spirituality") by selecting from a broad

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spectrum of religious offerings, whether in the form of religious groups and organizations or just in the form of mass media, for instance as a book or on the web.

2. At the same time, increasingly the individual seems to have become the topic of religion, not only as a holder of expectations concerning an individual afterlife, of "wellbeing" and as an object of "spiritual welfare", but as an addressee of specific rituals, of religious training, and as a subject of spiritual experiences.

The conceptual linking of modern age and religious individuality has obstructed looking at comparable phenomena in earlier periods, so that the focus on individuality has played only a limited role in the examination of the dynamics of religion in history. The religions of the great individuals, the religions of the poets and thinkers and the role of founders of a religion and reformers have, of course, been the subjects of much attention. This was – and is – due to the range of available sources, which seems to favor such an access: It is often literary products from single authors which are handed down in complete or extensive form, whereas verbal communication in groups and their objects is lacking evidence as much as testimonials for the reception of the aforementioned texts. By and large, it is the "great individual" who has commanded the attention of observers, of historiographers, or authors of letters. And yet it is precisely the deficits of such access to isolated figures which have led to criticism for at least half a century.

More recent approaches are interested in religious experience (Jung 2006; Taves 2009, 2010), in religion as communication (Malik, Rüpke, and Wobbe 2007; Rüpke 2001; Pace 2009; Stavrianopoulou 2006) or in the social or cognitive genesis of religious knowledge (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Lawson 2000; Whitehouse and McCauley 2005). For the role of the individual, for the distinction between "individual" and "society" within that cultural phenomenon which this Companion addresses as "religion", and for the archaeology of religion these approaches have hardly been used. This is all the more astonishing as religion represents a central instrument of individuation by individual prayer, vows or confessing methods in many cultures. Much of the archaeological evidence of religion from Mediterranean antiquity has been produced in the course of or in reflection of individual religious action. Religious individuality has concretized in our "sources", in the form of durable institutionalizations and as media of the communication. This chapter wants to point to the chances and problems of an approach within archaeology of religion which makes use of "individualization" and "individuality", concepts, which are heavily used as stereotypes of auto-description and ascription by others today and in the history of scholarship.

The Individual

It was M. Tullius Cicero, in his accounts and discussions of Greek philosophical positions, who coined the term *individua* as a translation of the Greek *átoma* (e.g., Cicero, *On the Ends of Good and Evil* 1.17). In his paraphrase of the Platonic *Timaios*, Cicero employed the term to distinguish between the indivisible and divisible matter used by the creator god to form the human soul *(animus*, 21*)*. Seneca could use the term "individual" for indivisible material connections and for indivisible goods like peace and liberty (*Dialogues* 1.5.9; *Letters* 73.8). By the end of the first century CE, the term could

be used for very strong bonds of friendship or love (Tacitus, *Annals* 6.10; Apuleius, *Apology* 53; *CIL* 8.22672). Within the philosophical discussion the ontological discussion about the priority of the individuals as first substances (Aristotle) or a priority of the generalities (Plotinos) remained dominant, leading to an understanding of individuals as clearly, demonstrably separate beings, easily illustrated by human individuals, but never restricted to human and superhuman rational beings (Rüpke 2013b: 9).

As far as I can see, neither the problems of the growth of individuality by developments in time and space of a single human being (individuation) nor the problem of the communication between separated individuals and hence the social dimension of any concept of individuality became a matter of debate in ancient texts. Unlike the discussions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, difference and distinction between persons did not form a central implication and, hence, problem of individuality in antiquity.

Today, the term "individual" is so frequently employed that the difficulties involved in using it to set an individual apart from society and social conformity in a historical inquiry are easily overlooked. In short, "individual" is turned into a normative concept at this very moment: One should be an individual – and, of course, the individualism reached today is the result of a process of individualization which categorically distinguishes the western modern age from the non-western world as from the ancient world, geographically as well as culturally.

This in turn has consequences for writing the history of religion. In regarding "western" pre-modern cultures, the concept of *polis* religion or civic religion – that is, the identity of the religious practices of a political unit and their functions with the whole of religion (see Rüpke 2007: 5–38; Eidinow 2011; Kindt 2012: 12–35 for criticism) – is just the reverse of the self-description of modern societies implied in the secularization thesis. Opposed to pre-modern religion as collective and public phenomenon, contemporary religion is mainly found in individual forms up to the point of being "invisible" (Luckmann 1967), if its fundamental decline is not taken for granted anyway (e.g., Bruce 1999).

A Conventional History of Individualization

The historical course of this process is reconstructed and dated very differently. According to the image designed in the nineteenth century, the individual is a product of the Renaissance which had made it possible to intentionally escape from one's own tradition for the first time by reviving pre-Christian antiquity. Thus, a space of critical distance towards traditional society by means of new groundbreaking philosophical, esthetic, linguistic, institutional and also religious alternatives could be formulated, or even organized and practiced (e.g., Martin 2004). This concerns the renewed establishment of Platonism besides and above Aristotelianism, the upgrading of everyday languages, of the vernacular, to written languages (Italian in addition to Latin, for example), the foundation of academies and the outlining of ideal states. If paganism did not become only an esthetic form but also a religious alternative (which remains controversial; see Stausberg 2009), a tradition of religious individualization could be identified which would be enlarged by late medieval practices of religious piety. Later in the sixteenth century, the Reformation made religion the object of individual choice and created space for the individual.

The period following showed a characteristic paradox of individualization processes. The institutionalization of religious individuality produced new norms and limitations. Both processes are hard to weight in a balance. Down into the eighteenth century the processes of confessionalization sharply defined group limits and assured the internalization of specific denominational norms. For any historical individual they did not create any religious option freely eligible.

The Western Way

In the discourse on individuality, the modernist view on ancient cultures is paralleled by a Western view on Oriental respectively Asian cultures. This merits a brief detour, which can make us aware of the transfer of prejudices. Admittedly, the French Indologist Louis Dumont had diagnosed Indian approaches to religious individualization in the phenomenon of ascetic renunciation. The starting point was formed by the assumption that in traditional societies individualism could appear in a clear opposition to society only (Dumont 1986: 26), that is in the form of extra-worldly oriented individuals. However, *pace* Dumont, Indian individualism remained ineffective in the long run since it did not come to the theocratic radicalization of social order as in Europe. Here, in a first phase, a religious authority (church and pope) was made superior to a more worldly power and later religious freedom of the individual was established in the institutionalized shape of a post-theocratic society itself. By contrast, in the Orientalist stereotype Asian despotism and collective protagonists like the "castes" dominated the imagination (Said 1978; Fuchs 1988; cf. Assayag, Lardinois, and Vidal 2001; Ibn 2007). This leads as far as to insinuate that certain non-European, contemporary, but so-called pre-modern cultures lack even the possibility of formulating any opposition of interests between "themselves" and "society". This, after all, has been successfully criticized by anthropologists (e.g., Spiro 1993). Recent work on the religion of the pre-modern and pre-Christian antiquity, usually characterized as "collective", has produced similar results. The extensive ancient discussions about religious deviance and the attempts to legally standardize religious behavior attest to the perception and acceptance of an extensive religious individuality practiced in quite different forms (Rüpke 2011).

Problems and Benefits in using Individuality as an Analytical Concept

The criticism of the self image of Western intellectuals of the exceptional individualization of the "modern age" could suggest to completely do without the concepts of "individual" and of "individuality", of "individuation" (the biographical process of acquiring a full member's role in a society; see Musschenga 2001: 5 for these terms) and "individualization" (the social structural process of institutional or discursive changes allotting more space for individuality) for archaeology of religion. The results mentioned before, however, do not recommend such a consequence. The polemical stamp of these concepts helps to steer our attention towards phenomena which have found too little attention within the usual collectivizing perspective – that is the very reason to introduce

the concept of individuality into this companion. Of course, it is necessary to resolve the concepts with their complex associations by differentiating forms, types and phenomena and by verifying such incipient typologies with the help of further material. This shall exemplarily be demonstrated below. Before that, however, we have to look even more carefully at the concept's perspective and try to avoid some pitfalls.

In everyday speech, "individuality" is a concept which marks differences: The difference of a human being to others, but even more of a human being to the society in which she or he lives. The concept includes two dimensions. First, it entails an objective dimension. "Individuality" addresses differences between individuals and between individuals and societies up to deviance and world rejection. A deviant individual's actions are judged to violate generally binding norms. Second, less dramatically understood, individuality could be conceptualized as the perception and practice of choices on part of the agent. The norms of a tradition and group are not determining the act of the individual any more. Such de-traditionalization might be a mass phenomenon. Differences between individuals can result from the fact that each individual combines different social roles and represents different knots of different overlapping networks.

This suggests to follow Georg Simmel (1917). He associated the historical development and distribution of individuality with the increased number of social circles touched by the increased density of contacts in towns. Historically, one could develop the follow-up hypothesis that phenomena of individuality can be found in towns and urban centers rather than in village and face-to face communities. As a consequence, geographically ancient Rome would be an especially interesting case. With regard to social hierarchy, individuality should be found in local élites which are embedded in supra-regional communications. They should also be found among immigrants rather than in small stationary populations – without denying the banal individuality of every human being already provided genetically.

The last sentence points to a fundamental problem: When are differences simply expressions of variability without consequences? When do they make a difference for the relationship of the individual to society at large? Such variations may neither impede the reproduction of society nor successful socialization, that is, the biographical integration of somebody into society. As a consequence of this problem to evaluate objective differences, the criterion for "individuality" is frequently supplemented by a look into the subjective side. Thus, reflective individuality would be given, if the agent, the subject, enters into a relationship to her or his "self" and reflects upon his or her difference compared to the group, the traditions or the variety of obligatory roles. Against all these norms and situational variations the individual should attain identity and coherence. Such concepts of the self can further be combined with different concepts like "soul" (frequently employed in antiquity; Bremmer 1983, 2002) or "inner person" (hardly employed in antiquity; Markschies 1997). Already in antiquity, starting with Plato, philosophical reflections on the "self" played an important role (e.g., Brakke et al. 2005). Important lines of such thought could be followed from the philosophy of the Hellenistic schools of Stoics and Epicurus through the biblically-inspired ideas of Jewish thinkers of the Hellenistic epoch (particularly Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus) into Middle and Neo-Platonic philosophy (and their reception in Christianity) (Arweiler and Möller 2008). One has to be aware, however, that frequently these reflections are not interested in a single, distinctive personage but in a generalized individual (Gill 2006, 2008).

Interest is focused on duties which arise from clear social positions (Gill 1988). Imagined communication with the divine or the presence of the divine in or for oneself could be of great importance in religiously stabilizing such subjective individuality (see Rüpke and Spickermann 2012 for examples). Historically, however, this is difficult to prove.

Consequences for Historical Research

Some of the aforementioned restrictions are matched by modern conditions. In an examination of religious behavior and religious convictions in the United States, Richard Madsen has shown that "individuality" is not a general feature of "modern" religion but has itself the character of an option. "Individuality" as a framework of interpretation as well as a form of behavior is primarily located among mobile members of the white middle class. For them it is confirmed by their own commitment and its social consequences (Madsen 2009: 1279–82). "Individuality" is not an arbitrary option, though, but carries a hegemonic character. It is a life form which is dominant and equipped with the claim to dominance in the eyes of the entire society (ibid). This insight has to be taken into account whenever biographical processes are analyzed in which individuals acquire "individuality" as full members of their society. Such a process of "individuation" – as I would like to call the biographical development of a single human being from a point of view which supplements the perspective of socialization – is a process of appropriation. It is dependent on ideals that are communicated and on concrete experiences made through these filters of perception. It is also dependent on the space available for individual lifestyles and the experiences of difference. Of course, the latter influence communication and imaginaries in turn.

This has important consequences for the analytical use of the concept of individuality in the archaeology of religion. It seems less fertile to examine concrete situations and persons for the existence of a religious individuality. What might be described as "individuality" in each case covers different phenomena which range from the unusual combination of different divinities through ritual innovations and competitive donations up to reflections about one's own relationship to traditional behaviors. It is a mere postulate to insinuate that all these phenomena are only different expressions of the very same individuality. This insinuation is just the outcome of a theory of modernization which needs a uniform individuality scale as a yardstick of modernization.

Taking individuality primarily as a concept of differences, it is necessary to analyze the interaction between collective and individual protagonists and the constraints witnessed by the agent. Archaeology of religion opens the field of material culture for such analyses. This includes the options available for religious communication and expression from mass-produced votives to innovative or archaizing architectural projects, from variations in the combination of standard tomb offerings to portraits, from identifying niches to reconstructing spatial constraints and their interpretation in the users' mere accessing or filling with donations. Whether different forms of such individuality strengthen each other, become long-term institutions or reproducible models or discursive formations that could be handed down, is historically contingent and can be examined under the heading of "processes of individualization" (see Joas and Rüpke 2013).

Again, it is a mere postulate that such processes are uniform and unidirectional. Late Antiquity witnessed reflections about individual religious alternatives and real choices. At

the same time, it was marked by increasing legal standardization and violent compulsion to a local religious conformity. Past processes of individualization are not early forms and precursors of "modern" individualization, nor is "modern" individuality categorically different from such "pre-modern" forms of individuality. And yet, its use enables comparison between epochs and cultures and thus offers new interpretative frameworks, eagerly needed for a review of interpretive schemes that have dominated a period characterized by a scarcity of coherent sources and have pressed the counter stereotype of collectivity onto the evidence.

Religious Individuality in Antiquity

Let me in this introductory essay briefly review some of the most promising fields of research, singling out three areas, consisting of at least two fields each (more extensively in Rüpke 2013a; Rüpke and Spickermann 2012; Rüpke and Woolf 2013).

Structural individuality in ancient polytheism

Comparatively easily detectible is how individuals combined gods according to their situational or role-specific needs in different fields. Domestic cult and the assembling of statuettes in a house altar is the first field. When seen statistically, the results for specific places or regions are not very surprising (see, e.g., Cicala 2007; Bassani 2008; Fröhlich 1991; Kaufmann-Heinemann 1998). The predominance of certain divine signs, i.e., gods, is easily explained by reference to typical functions or local traditions (Van Andringa 2009: 265–9). And yet, the specific pattern, the combinations of gods, materials, different age and provenance of statuettes and images of any particular household suggests a very individual character of the collection (265; Bodel 2008: 261).

In antiquity, the choice was not made from a catalogue. Objects handed down from older members of the family found their place besides newly-purchased ones selected from local production or merchants. Local public cults made a big impression, but this type of formation is occasionally supplemented or even supplanted by knowledge offered by texts or one's own journeys. The archaeological finds – rare enough, as the easily transportable items were usually removed, when the inhabitants left their place – is a synchronic image of a long biographical, perhaps trans-generational process. These selections were, of course, influenced by typical selections of significant others, even more so by publicly-accessible documents of dramatized selections, that is dedications, votive offerings and inscriptions in temples or even the participation in such rituals.

Publicly-accessible sanctuaries consequently offered a second field for religious action. As we learn from Aelius Aristides in the second century CE, one could be drawn into ritual proceedings unintentionally. Aelius was admonished by Asclepios to go into his sanctuary, offer sacrifice, put up the dedications and to distribute sacrificial shares to all those present (*Sacred Tales* 2.27), certainly a nice surprise (or an expected form of dining?) for the latter. Children would learn such rituals from participating, for instance by forming choirs to perform hymns (4.43; see in general Van der Leeuw 1939; Brelich 1969). Individuation was a social process, just like socialization. To conform is as much

a matter of learning as to know about the extent of one's own competence and legitimate difference.

Not every vow and dedication was a crisis ritual, and many crises were typical and frequent, like illness, crop failure, giving birth or emancipation of slaves. And yet individual competence was agreed upon. The degree of details in family or occupational positioning on inscriptions varied widely, gods were invoked who were unknown locally. In order to define situations and divine help invoked as precisely as possible, innovative combinations and, even more, innovative names were created. At Carthage, we find a single instance of a juxtaposition of Juno, Minerva, and Bellona with a Diana Caelestis Augusta; dedicants might simultaneously address deities as distant as Sicilian Venus Erycina and the Thracian hero (Rives 1995: 186–93 pointing to *CIL* 8.999; 24528 and 24518 and *Inscriptiones Latinae Africae* 354 = *CIL* 8.24354), thus attesting individual speculation rather than standardized practices (Rives 1995: 190–2). One might call this a *cult pragmatic individuality*. Again, however, we should not think of isolated action. What we find are perhaps also, or at least partly, the results of priestly consultation and artisans' knowledge. It is the very individual "confessional inscriptions" from Lydia and Phrygia which most clearly demonstrate the close collaboration of clients and priests within the context of a sanctuary (see Petzl 1994; and interpretations by Belayche 2006, 2008).

Intensification of religious practices

Even leaving theoretical atheism as a very rare choice aside (Auffarth 1997; Obbink 1989; Winiarczyk 1990), there was more than participation and non-participation in public rituals. Space available for participants was very limited. Many altar-bearing platforms in front of Roman temples could accommodate only a few dozens of people. Following Krautheimer, Ramsay MacMullen has suggested that there were perhaps only around 4500 places within titular churches in late fourth-century Rome (2010: 597–8). As a consequence, decentralized rather than centralized rituals might have seen the largest mobilization.

Again, two fields are relevant for phenomena of intensification. Complex cults and religious organizations were dependent on a division of labor, including servile butchers and writers, children as assistants, musicians and priests. Again, many roles were defined by associated social prestige and political functions and are hardly witnesses of specifically religious individuality. And yet we know of a number of very peculiar appropriations (De Certeau 2007) of such roles, leading to visible changes in lifestyle. For Rome, there is a greater frequency in the loss of priestly offices in the late third century BCE (Rüpke 2010a). Changes in behavior after becoming a *flamen* or even the interruption of military operations are known from the early second century BCE (ibid.). Given the lack of alternatives, religious roles and honorific positions must have been even more important for women and libertines and might be the single element of characterization on a tomb inscription (e.g., Rüpke 2008: no. 471, P. Aelius Malcus Tector, *CIL* 6.2256 = *ILS* 2090; see also nos. 361; 365; 464; 466 etc.; Rüpke 2006). This could be termed *expressive individuality*. In several cases we learn about it from the collection of historical *exempla* composed by Valerius Maximus in the early 30s of the first century CE. Exceptional behavior from the past is turned into exemplary behavior for the present (see Mueller 2002: 148–74; Rüpke forthcoming).

"Elective cults", institutionalized options (see, e.g., Bonnet, Rüpke, and Scarpi 2006; Casadio 2006; Bowden 2010), have been treated in recent scholarship in a similar vein. However, we do not have any statistics about the frequency of their meetings; sometimes dramatic rituals of change of status – we see the sham execution of a mithraicist-to-be in a Roman fresco (Gordon 2013) – probably did not correspond with a high frequency of interaction within the group. Frequent meetings cannot be excluded, but sequences of votives or remnants of meals (see, e.g., Schäfer and Diaconescu 1997; Martens and De Boe 2004) do not offer corroborative evidence. Furthermore, as already indicated, the ascertaining of individual choice and subjecting to behavioral norms were two sides of the same process of institutionalization (see North 1994). Virtuosi roles as known from Christian monks are hardly paralleled in other cults but by some diviners and some philosophers, approaching the field of religion in the imperial period as illustrated by Apollonios von Tyana (Demoen and Praet 2009; Hahn 1989).

Visionary individuality

Let me finally point to individual revelations and biographies of authors, present primarily, but not only, in literary texts. Thousands of inscriptions, often in the very reduced form of *ex visu,* "from a vision", attest to dreams and visions in which gods appeared, spoke, and ordered. Formulas and atypical formulations are present. The large number of deities thus credited is astonishing, more than a hundred according to Gil Renberg (see 2010). Individual religious action – usually dedication – is legitimized by pointing to individual communication with a deity. Such a strategy is known on a larger scale from the already mentioned venerator of Asclepios, Aelius Aristides (117–after 177 CE; see, for instance, 4.45–6). Far beyond piecemeal legitimization, in his case it is the autobiography as such, which results from the transmission of a divine message (see 2.4). The production of the text is a drama in itself (Petsalis-Diomidis 2006: 201). Divine intervention is made plausible by a detailed narrative construction of the author and his individuality. John of Patmos was the first to use the term "apocalypsis" for a revelatory genre and the first author of such a text, giving an individual face and autobiographical history to himself. At Rome, a person addressed as Hermas in his text, "the Shepherd of Hermas", followed these lines, making the hearer or reader participate even in his sinful thoughts and their reproaches earned from the revelatory figure (see Rüpke 2005; Osiek 1999; Rüpke 1999). Following models of Hellenistic authorial self-presentation, Hermas, Aristides, and later Augustine made their divine interlocutor open a space for narrating their own individuation, their own becoming a specifically religious individual.

Such texts were aimed at the recitation in institutionalized discursive spaces, meetings of religious groups as described above. The complex interaction of individualization and institutionalization as two interrelated processes are visible here. But temples, the regular infrastructure of ancient religions, should not be forgotten as places for religious individuality. Astonishingly, many texts and regulations concern individual differences, if not deviances, in the appropriation of these sacred rooms and their resources of divine presence primarily in the shape divine images (Rüpke 2010b).

Methodical Consequences

If one wants to use the idea of the individual and individuality in religious studies to free the description of "modern" religiousness from its allegedly unique situation, certain consequences have to be accepted. These start in the choice of the objects of research, in focusing on individual practices, on life-cycle rituals in their importance not only for the constitution of communities, as Victor Turner (1982) has emphasized, but also for the process of the individuation. "Family" or individual religious practices in the house (which can extend up to the space of burial grounds and many other places) accrue. Religious activities from common banqueting and prayer to shared dedications in different social and urban spaces and in changing groups must not be solidified as permanent and well organized "cults" and "religions", formulating and achieving far-reaching normative claims and "identities". Instead, they must be analyzed with regard to their temporary and situational character, with regard to the many roles involved and the widely diverse strategic interests of the participants. Through the lens of "individualization" "religion" is as much a traditional system of symbols as a strategic option of an individual. Archaeology, frequently taking textual material into account, provides crucial tools for analyzing such interpretation of spaces in performative no less than material form.

Lived religiosity, "lived religion", as re-formulated by urban anthropologist Meredith McGuire (McGuire 2008), is a helpful concept, even if heuristic rather than descriptive. Instead of inquiring into how individuals reproduce a set of religious practices and intellectual tenets of a "faith" (Stausberg 2001), "religion" is to be reconstructed as everyday experiences, practices, expressions and interactions, which define religion as practice, idea, and community ever new. The very different, strategic, if necessary even subversive forms of individual appropriation are analytically confronted with traditions, their normative claims, and their institutional protections. Thus the precarious state of institutions and traditions comes to the fore. These are as much means of expression and creativity of their inventors and patrons as spaces and material of experience and innovation for their users and clients. If this sounds like a truism, the perspective of individualization asks for registering changes in degrees, trends, causes and contexts. This is a task which is as important for the Ancient Mediterranean as for the modern world, East and West.

Guide to Further Reading

For an introduction into ancient concepts of the self and individuality see the chapters in Brakke, Satlow, and Weitzman (2005), Rüpke and Spickermann (2012), and Rüpke and Woolf (2013). Historical case studies of processes of religious individualization are analyzed in Rüpke (2013a).

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CHAPTER 34

Material Culture and Imagined Communities in the Roman World

Eva Mol and Miguel John Versluys

"There were tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. They were of all colours, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe could never exist between the white and non-white" (A. Haley, The autobiography of Malcolm X (1999) 346–347)

Introduction: Ritual, Religious Communities and Material Culture

Religious experience is a strong instrument in creating a sense of community. In the case of Malcolm X, his 1964 Hajj profoundly changed his life (Haley 1999). He was able to temporarily overcome even the most pervasive social dichotomy of his time and evoke feelings of universal brotherhood. The ritual of the Hajj allowed him to participate in a shared value system with a strong and immediate ecumenical effect: all participants experienced how they went from different-to-the-extreme to being part of a unity. Religious experience, ritual, and community are closely-related concepts: it is ritual that triggers religious group experience, which reinforces belief and creates community (McGuire 2002). Religious experience, therefore, has to be produced time and again through ritual. In this process it becomes dependent on specific markers or symbols that community members connect to. In this chapter we will argue and illustrate that material culture (objects, architecture, and decoration) plays a pivotal role in creating and stimulating religious experience and must therefore be considered a powerful tool in the construction of communities. We will explore how material culture was able to create and stimulate the feeling of belonging to a specific group by focusing on (theoretical) concepts like "imagined communities", "symbolic construction" and "communion". As a case study we have selected the Roman cults of Isis.

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

Ritual is *the* main constituent of Roman religion. As John Scheid wrote: "*quand faire c'est croire*" (Scheid 2005). All these ritual actions could simply not have functioned without temples, altars, cult statues, ex-votos, inscriptions and all the special paraphernalia ranging from lamps, pottery, musical instruments and other cultic utensils, to priestly cloths and insignia. Whereas it is primarily ritual that makes ancient religion, it is primarily material culture that makes ritual. It is material culture, one could argue, that makes ritual tangible and religion do-able. It is important, however, to note that material culture is not only essential in order to make ritual and religion work; material culture also has its own agency and is able to act on the environment and its inhabitants. As such, objects have the power to not just constitute but even change religious behavior and religions. A recent book by Guy Stroumsa (2009) underlines the importance of this perspective. Stroumsa argues that the major changes occurring in Jewish religion after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE (and its effects on religious transformations in late Antiquity) had a very tangible reason: the disappearance of their cult place with the altar to perform sacrifices forced the Jews to invent a totally new form of ritual that would lead, eventually, to very different concepts of religion.

This example shows that material culture can play an important role in the construction of (religious) communities: both actively constitute one another. Material culture makes religion and ritual both feasible and visible, and as such it serves as an index of the religious community and its ideas (Arweck and Keenan 2006). Take, for example, the cult of Mithras: the colorful reliefs that show the Roman deity Mithras killing the bull literally explain what the myth is about, while other objects and the Mithrea themselves were such strong tools in guiding ritual behavior that they are able to help present-day scholars to reconstruct Mithraic rituals in detail. As such, material culture associated with Mithras is a reflection, a representation of ritual and religion. On the other hand, there is the active role this material culture played *beyond* representation. Mithraism could only be Mithraism because of its specific set of material culture that, in the words of Richard Gordon (2007), was hard at work to achieve the sophisticated self-distancing that characterizes the Roman cult of Mithras and its success. As with the end of sacrifice and subsequent Jewish cultural innovation discussed by Stroumsa (2009), Mithraic cultic content and ritual are *expressed* in material culture whilst simultaneously it is material culture that *constitutes* Mithraic ritual and cult. An archaeology of (lived) ancient religion, as we will argue in this chapter, should focus on both aspects and therefore *not* look primarily at what material culture can tell us about religious concepts in the ancient world (*meaning*), but at what it does; what active role it plays in its historical context (*use/agency*). In applying this perspective we will focus on the functioning of ritual and religion with the construction of community and then specifically on the role of material culture in experiencing religious communal belonging.

The subject of formation of social groups through religious experiences has been extensively addressed in the anthropology and sociology of religion. Émile Durkheim (1995) realized the essentially communal quality of religion and saw religious rituals as representations of the social group: rituals would be collective representations through which the community expressed important values about itself to its own members. This communication *within* – the interaction between members – is most important for the functioning of the community because belonging, contrary to other social groups such as a family or a tribe, is not a matter of fact but has to be created. Thus, by participating in group rituals, individual members would renew their link with the community through a reaffirmation of shared meanings (1995). This view, that sees rituals and communities

as *integrative*, still seems to be commonly held by most scholars working on religious communities in Antiquity (see Belayche and Mimouni 2003; and, in general, McGuire 2002). Durkheim very much emphasized the social aspect of community. However, he did not take their mental construction into account – which we now know as the imaginative aspect of communities (Anderson 1991) – nor does Durkheim properly address the agency of rituals and material culture.

In the following sections we will first give an introduction to what religious communities in the Roman Empire entail (2). We will then outline a theoretical framework that, beyond the tradition of Durkheim, focuses on the imaginative aspect of communities (their symbolic construction) and has material culture as an active constituent in that process (3). We will present the concept of *communion* as being important in that respect (4). In our case study, finally, we will try and apply this approach and briefly discuss several sanctuaries for the Roman cult of Isis and the Egyptian gods in terms of group dynamics, taking the Iseum in Pompeii as our main example (5).

Communities and Religion in the Roman World

In the Roman world, to organize oneself in a community meant to celebrate a common cult (Egelhaaf-Gaiser and Schäfer 2002). It is now well realized that associations, clubs or *confréries* (all translations and interpretations of the terms *collegia* or *sodalitas*, in Latin, and *synodos*, *koinon* or *thiasos* in Greek) constitute one of the main organizing principles of the Roman world below the level of the state (Van Nijf 1997; Belayche and Mimouni 2003; *Hephaistos* 24; Dondin-Payre and Tran 2012). The associations, therefore, were an important instrument to structure social life in the Roman Empire and people could associate themselves with several clubs at the same time. It seems that besides their organizational structure (communal dining, an hierarchical structure and a common fund) the *confréries* could be extremely different in character. It is only their structure that was orientated inwards; the associations themselves were very much outward looking (Scheid 2003). *Collegia* were therefore not exclusive or targeted at specific (religious, ethnic or professional) identities alone. And, of course, by definition all *collegia* had a religious dimension in one way or another (Rüpke 2004).

It is therefore difficult to say what exactly a "religious community" entailed in the Roman world. Scheid called it a tautology (2003) and John North (2003) summarized our problems with studying them in three points: (1) The experience of individuals cannot be separated from the development of communities at large; (2) The development of different religious groups must be seen as connected and not be studied in isolation; and (3) All developments must be interpreted against the background of a rapidly-evolving world. But how, then, to study the material culture associated with these groups in terms of symbolic construction?

Material Culture and Imagined Communities

Here we will refer to two books in order to answer that question. The first (Anderson 1991, originally 1983) has developed the imaginative aspect of communities. This implies that we should regard communities not as statically bound entities that can be

clearly demarcated, but that instead we should see them as socially constructed and therefore as a *process* that is fluid and ever-changing. The second book (Cohen 1985) stresses the importance of the symbolic and mental construction of group identity. Both authors point to the importance of markers (Anderson) and symbols (Cohen) within this construction and both, therefore, pay attention to material culture.

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* argues that communities are social constructions that only exist in people's minds: a community is imagined by the people who perceive themselves as being part of that (particular) community. Anderson (1991: 6) defined "imagined community" as *a temporary connection between people combined with the absence of direct or daily contact*. The actual subject of his book relates to nationalism and the (nineteenth century) nation-state: for Anderson, it is the nation that forms the best (and most extreme) example of an imagined community. Members of a nation clearly form a group, although one single member can never know all the other members of the community and therefore the community has to be imagined. As Anderson (ibid.) puts it: "*[it] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion*". The imagined community should therefore be regarded as dynamic and not based on ethnical accounts but on mental construction and experience. The concept of the imagined community recognizes that a community is never so secluded that its members are isolated from outsiders: there are always transversal alliances (Isbell 2000). What matters is the experience of belonging as a social reality. Furthermore, Anderson argues that community identifiers play an important role in the creation of imagined communities; mutual identification had to be made visible for people in order to share their "identity".

Anthony Cohen's *Symbolic Construction of Community* reflects on the ways in which the boundaries to communities are symbolically defined and how people become aware of belonging to a community through the use of symbols. Any definition of community, Cohen argues, rests on the assumption that the members of a group of people have something in common with each other that distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. For Cohen, communities are about *belonging* and it is the connection and attachment to the group that encapsulates their identity. By definition, communities thus invest profoundly in their own group identity and their sense of belonging. They thereby construct mental categories of Us and Them that provide, for each community member, (psychological) states such as safety, comfort, association and participation. Communities are thus actively constructing categories of Us and Them, but only as an outcome of their need to create belonging. This construction is *symbolic* and therefore needs symbols to be (made) visible.

We can see that both Anderson and Cohen stress the importance of markers in generating a sense of belonging. Understanding communities as imagined communities, therefore, usefully redirects our emphasis from meaning to use/agency and foregrounds the active role that material culture plays with group dynamics. "*Most often symbols do more than merely stand for or represent something: indeed if that was all they did, they would be redundant*" (Cohen 1985: 14; see also Schudson 1989). Symbols and markers, therefore, allow those who employ them to supply part of their meaning. It is their inherent polyvalence that makes them attractive as symbols in the first place. The crucifix is a telling example of the success of ambiguous symbolism. Therefore, symbols can be similar, but their meanings are not shared in a similar way, or, as Cohen (1985: 15)

puts it: "*Symbols do not so much express meaning as give us the capacity to make meaning.*" Returning to the Mithras iconography: this functioned as such a symbol. It certainly expressed the meaning of what the myth and cult of Mithras were about – as a so-called "theology-in-images". However, in view of the approach to the agency of material culture advocated in this chapter, it is equally important to consider what it *did*. It could have evoked, for instance, in some instances and contexts, the non-Roman or Persian Other, but it also evoked the Other that now was Roman; it might, through the private character of the cult, have suggested a sense of personal religion but simultaneously, through its focus on sacrifice, Roman public religion; it might have referred to the old and alien wisdom of the East whilst simultaneously, through its strong although not exclusive relation to the army, it might have referred to the Roman present (see Gordon 2007). Apparently Mithras was a powerful symbol to make meaning with (cf. Versluys 2012); however, what is even more important is the conclusion that sharing the same symbol, like Mithras, did not imply sharing the same meaning at all. What is held in common is form, not meaning. This example clearly shows the pivotal role of material culture within the symbolic construction of communities: as a community marker *and* as a community creator. Therefore, the focus should be on the active, constituting role of material culture as symbol; by realizing that the meaning of these symbols is ambiguous and (always) an outcome of their use. The same symbol, in other words, can be important through the demarcation or creation of very different (imagined) communities.

Material Culture and Religious Experience: Communion

Malcolm X felt the boundaries of the community he imagined himself to belong to (that of black Americans) stretched, evaporated, and rearranged during his Hajj. Religious experience, as concluded above, indeed has both the power to symbolically define *and* to change boundaries of communities. However, Malcolm X shared a commitment during the Hajj not only with another (imagined) community, but also with the divine in a moment of increased spirituality induced by ritual. This type of religious action is called *communion*. Communion is the result of a typical form of social interaction that is able to rework the routines of everyday life and to create new networks. In its weakest form, it is described as a sense of connection to a certain place, group, or idea. In its strongest form, communion consists of a profound encounter resulting in belonging – not just with other people, but also with the divine. For Malcolm X, visiting Mecca on a study trip would not have had the transforming effect of communion: it is the religious experience of the Hajj that for the first time opened up the existence of a community that he (also) belonged to and that he was unaware of until then. The transforming aspect of communion is of such importance because it enables people to build communities and rework the social fabric by committing themselves to each other and to the divine. Just as communities need symbols, they also need communion in order to strengthen attachment and to foster a sense of belonging. In other words: people need to reclaim community through communion. With the Hajj, interaction with other community members and ritual praxis play an important role in creating a momentum of intensified collective belonging. Within this process, material culture is of great importance.

The memory of communion, for instance, was often (re-)experienced through material culture. The construction of community perceived during the cultic experience was temporary, bound to a physical location and depended on symbols such as specifically designed architecture, objects and decorations. As such, these material symbols acquired the ability to function as a reference to the communion and the community, also when the ritual had passed. Although the feeling of belonging became weaker after the event, when the community members returned to their other communities (those of work, family, other religious groups, etc., all with similar constructs and physical and material markers), the event had created a powerful communion that became tangible through certain symbols and objects. With the Hajj, for instance, that experience is bound to a specific place and we see that many Hajis take souvenirs home with them: they form a tangible memory of the experience of their communion (Porter 2012).

Group Dynamics and the Roman Cults of Isis

The material aspect of communion and the way it was able to construct group identity can be usefully discussed through the Roman cults of Isis. The cults of Isis (for definitions see Malaise 2005; Bricault 2013) provide a good example to study the relation between the functioning of material culture and the creation of a sense of belonging for various reasons. We know that, in the Roman world, people relating themselves to Isis and her circle came from very heterogeneous backgrounds: both men and women worshipped the Isiac gods and they belonged to various ethnic, social and cultural strata, varying from the Emperor to the slave population. It seems hard to imagine, therefore, that they would have been able to function as a so-called natural community (Isbell 2000). Moreover, the Roman cults of Isis made use of very specific symbols, rituals, and instruments. Roman literary and epigraphic sources regarding communities related to "Egyptian religion" are telling in this respect and so are the archaeological sources (Figure 34.1). Although there are epigraphic and literary testimonials – we hear of *pastophores*, *pausarii*, *isiaci* and *cultores* of Isis and Sarapis — very little is known about the social make-up or functioning of these groups (Bricault 2013: 287–320 presents an overview with full bibliography).

The cults of Isis are, of course, as good as any Roman cultic expression to study relations between ritual, religious communities and material culture. However, in terms of symbolism (above, section 3) special strategies seem to have been employed in their case (Versluys 2013), which might make them particularly interesting for our purpose. A second reason to focus on the cults of Isis is that they have hardly been studied from this perspective (Martzavou 2012 is a recent and important exception) and what follows is therefore also meant to explore the feasibility of this approach for a better understanding of the Roman cults of Isis as lived religion.

We will focus on how religious experience and communion took place at Isis sanctuaries and how religious communities were symbolically bound to Isis and the Egyptian gods through material culture. Religious experience, as argued above, should be considered a culmination of all elements of communion working together as a holistic unity: space, architecture, decorations, objects, cloths, music, and people. To study these aspects for the cults of Isis from an archaeological point of view we will zoom in on architecture,

Figure 34.1 The Ariccia relief (early second century CE). Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome. Photo courtesy of Sander Müskens.

architectural decorations and objects. Due to its preservation, the Iseum of Pompeii will serve as the focal point of our case study (whilst being aware of the fact that it is unsound to generalize conclusions on this Iseum for the Mediterranean world at large). The Isis sanctuary of Pompeii, located next to the theater of the town, was built either in the late second or early first century BCE and was thoroughly rebuilt after an earthquake in 62 CE (for a detailed overview and historiography, see Gasparini 2011). Much of the architecture of the sanctuary remains in situ whilst the original placement of wall paintings, statues and other (cult) objects can be reconstructed.

To start with architecture: religious architecture seeks to transform and transcend everyday life (Jones 2000). In order to achieve this, it must be both recognizable and familiar but at the same time create an alienating effect. How did the sanctuaries of Isis reach this effect? When we look at the sanctuaries and their configuration of space, it becomes evident that physical barriers in the form of walls surrounding the sanctuary terrain could be created, which prohibited visibility and movement for occasional visitors and passers-by. Entering the temple of Isis thus became a conscious decision. In the case of the – in architectural terms – rather similar temples in Pompeii, Belo, and Sabratha it seems that the walls form a physical boundary in order to emphasize entering a different world belonging to a sacred space. The walls, therefore, are an important tool in creating the (alienating) effect of going from one world to another and therefore also in creating the setting of communion. In this respect, it is interesting that the Belo temple imitated the Egyptian temple feature of the pylon gateway (Dardaine et al. 2006). This Egyptian boundary to the goddess Isis will not only have accentuated the Egyptian nature of the Roman cults of Isis, but will similarly have signaled a clear opposition between secular space and sacred space.

If we look at how space is configured in Isea, it becomes apparent that communion is stimulated both in a physical and in a conceptual (or imaginative) way. After the boundary of the temple wall, a new boundary arose in the form of a portico, as illustrated again by

the temples of Pompeii, Belo and Sabratha. The portico forms a demarcation with the actual center of the sanctuary. It also enforces a feeling of spaciousness around the temple proper: from the relatively low and dark portico it is the peristyle of the sanctuary, being an open space and the main source of light in the building, which looks large and spacious. Spaciousness can be considered a most important feature in religious settings (Clark 2007). Through the experience of ritual in a large, open space the participant becomes aware of different levels of self-perception: he not only sees himself and his fellow participants in a certain *place*, but also, through *space*, experiences the divine and the universe. In the *Rote Halle* in Pergamon (Mania 2008), for instance, spaciousness has been deliberately accentuated by turning the place into a very tall and voluminous hall for ritual communion. The extremely spacious northern temple garden (or courtyard) from the Iseum Campense in Rome (Lembke 1994) will have created a similar effect. This means that the architectural feature of the portico also helps in defining religious space in a more applied manner. Through its form, the portico created a monumental architectural and visual frame that directed the attention of the participant to the temple. The temples proper of the sanctuaries of Isis in Pompeii, Ras el-Soda and Sabratha are situated on a high podium to enforce this effect. In this way, the temple, the altar, and the priest(s) performing the ritual become the sole viewpoint for the community assembled through the portico, whilst the space directly surrounding the temple becomes a stage. Of course, sanctuaries for Isis and the Egyptian gods are not alone in creating such effects. The general overview of Isea and their architecture (Kleibl 2009), however, suggests a particular emphasis on performance and performativity with the cults of Isis that should be a focus of further research.

The portico thus marked the threshold from public to profane and made the temple and its direct surroundings into a stage; but it also had other (practical) functions. During rituals with a larger group of people the portico will have acted as an assembly space. This is important in terms of group dynamics: through its particular architectural characteristics the portico created a more intimate atmosphere around the temple, thereby physically organizing the community. This can be seen in a relief in Luna marble from a tomb along the Via Appia in Ariccia (Figure 34.1), which depicts, in the upper register, the interior of a temple for the Egyptian gods, and on the lower a ritual dance. The lower part shows the audience physically singled out in the frame experiencing the ritual in a sort of frenzy state. The famous paintings from a house in Herculaneum depict a similar kind of communion in a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods (Bricault 2013).

When moving from discussing the architecture of Isea to their architectural decoration(s), we become mainly dependent on the temple in Pompeii: this is the only Iseum that has been sufficiently preserved, in particular its wall paintings. In interpreting these paintings, several authors have suggested that there would be some sort of hierarchy: the more secluded and religious the space in the sanctuary would be, the more Egyptian the wall paintings would become (cf. Moormann 2012). There might be more at stake, however, than providing a progressive religious hierarchy from Roman to (Hellenized) Egyptian and then to "traditional" Egyptian. Could it be that the intimate space provided by the portico as an architectural element – as opposed to the courtyard and temple that served as the estranging space –was sustained by its wall paintings? The decoration in the portico would then not deliberately create something "Roman" but something recognizable, which people saw in their homes on a daily basis. This would

make the contrast with the temple space even more profound, as the temple itself was decorated with white stucco alone and featured Egyptianizing terracotta roof tiles, whilst a limestone stele showing hieroglyphs dating to the Ptolemaic period stood next to the central staircase of the *cella*. A similar reasoning applies to the Iseum Campense in Rome, where the monumental entrance court dedicated to Domitian and the Flavian Imperial house functioned as familiar as opposed to the very different and alienating garden or courtyard framed by it.

So whereas the safety of the portico (marked by both architecture and decoration) might have shaped a collective identity by its boundary-effects and intimacy, the space surrounding the temple (and the ritual(s) taking place there) produced effects of estrangement and sacredness, uplifting and transforming the audience from their everyday lives. This is communion: ritual as a holistic performance whereby space, architecture, decorations, objects, sounds, and the spoken word were all used to produce a religious experience. In this respect, the importance of alienating effects to make communion work must be underlined. In temples for Isis, priests could be dressed in special robes and have their heads shaven; sometimes even Jackal-headed masks of the god Anubis were worn. Furthermore, parts of rituals could be enacted in a dance, as the Herculaneum paintings show. Hymns were chanted in Greek and Egyptian. Music was made with the very specific instrument of the rattle or *sistrum*; a sound not commonly heard in everyday life and produced by an instrument that was closely tied to Egypt.

With the *sistrum* we have moved from discussing the architectural decoration of Isea to the objects characterizing their ritual. Distinctly Isis cult-related artefacts like the *sistrum* are a recurrent feature in Isea; they have been found in Isis sanctuaries in Pompeii, Cyme, Rome, Benevento, Pergamon and Ras el-Soda. All these sanctuaries in addition possessed Egyptian imports or Egyptian-style objects made from local material. The Iseum Campense in Rome and the sanctuary in Benevento clearly illustrate the importance of this aspect. These Flavian temples possessed a substantial and eclectic range of both imports and locally-produced Egyptian artefacts (Lembke 1994). For a greater part these examples consist of a variety of statues of animals, such as baboons, crocodiles, sphinxes, lions, and falcons, all executed in dark Egyptian stone types such as granite, basalt or greywacke. For the Iseum Campense, Domitian ordered an obelisk with hieroglyphic inscription to be constructed from Egyptian red granite; inscriptions on obelisks made for the Benevento sanctuary even feel the need to underline that they are made from real Egyptian stone. These objects deliberately tried to create an Egyptian atmosphere and their placement within the sanctuary will have underlined that. What, however, did this Egyptian atmosphere do; why was it important? It seems that these *aegyptiaca* created an effect of the extraordinary and the sacred in order to reinforce transformation and community building – as has been described above. In the case of Isis, apparently, it was in particular these aegyptiaca that helped activate this religious experience, probably because they were so markedly different ("exotic"). With aegyptiaca came a whole string of associations related to the idea of Egypt as one of the world's oldest civilizations in possession of true (spiritual) wisdom. Aegyptiaca, therefore, will not so much have evoked the country of Egypt itself but much more the cultural memory of Egypt in the Mediterranean as a culture that could claim a very special (and superior) form of mystery religion. Aegyptiaca thus could be symbols or markers of the imagined community of Isis worshippers but they acquired their real agency, opened up that

immense reservoir of the cultural memory that was Egypt (Versluys 2012) mainly in ritual and communion. This human-thing entanglement was able to create a very strong religious experience that undoubtedly was an important asset of the Roman cults of the Egyptian gods in terms of community creation.

Guide to Further Reading

For a discussion on communities and their construction turn, as we did, to Anderson (1991) and Cohen (1985). Another very useful classic is Barth (1969). More specific on archaeology and communities are Canuto and Yeager (2000). For religion and communities in the Roman world see Rüpke (2007); stretching out more in place and time are Harland (2003) and Belayche and Mimouni (2003). For an overview of Isis sanctuaries see Wild (1984), now with Kleibl (2009). For the importance of material culture and agency with the study of (ancient) religion in general, consult the Journal *Material Religion* (Bloomsbury Publishing) and the recent volume edited by Houtman and Meyer (2012).

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PART IX

Transformations

CHAPTER 35

Ritual Traditions of Non-Mediterranean Europe

Greg Woolf

Introduction: Written Testimony and its Limitations

The subject of this chapter is the archaeology of ritual in temperate Europe, during the period 500 BCE–500 CE. Many of the practices described may be traced back to the Bronze Age, whilst in Scandinavia and northern Germany some continued until the conversion to Christianity. Within such a broad geographical and chronological frame there were naturally many variations, and some specific ritual forms are accurately characterized as local. But it has become increasingly apparent that there were also broad commonalities across non-Mediterranean Europe (Bradley 2005; Parker Pearson 2006). It is now also clear that notions of "Celtic", "German" or "Nordic" religion have no discernible archaeological correlates (Fitzpatrick 1991; DuBois 1999). A number of practices such as the ritual killing of humans and the deposit of their remains in bogs, the ritual destruction of weapons and the differences between the sacrifice of domestic food animals and animals that were not consumed occur widely across supposed ethnic divides. Certain ritual practices, such as cult at springs or on mountain peaks, were also common in the Mediterranean World even if the specific rituals performed in such locations – weapons thrown into lakes or burned offerings (*Brandopfer*) on mountain tops in Europe – were distinctive.

Around the turn of the millennium, a large part of this vast region was forcibly incorporated into the Roman Empire. That cultural encounter transformed ritual practices and knowledge about them, the modes of representing the gods, and ideas about the proper roles of religious specialists and sacred places. This chapter is not concerned with the religious institutions or practices of the region under Roman rule, which reflected in part the influence of Italian and Mediterranean norms and in part local traditions (Derks 1998; Woolf 1998: 206-37; Van Andringa 2002, 2006). That cultural encounter, however, also generated the greater part of the ancient textual evidence in terms of which prehistoric religion has – until very recently – been mainly understood.

A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World, First Edition.
Edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke.

The principal literary sources for pre-Roman ritual are the accounts offered of Gallic and Germanic religion by Caesar (*De bello Gallico*, especially 6.13–21) and Tacitus (*Germania*, especially 9–10) to which may be added other scattered testimonia also mostly generated in the last and first centuries. Most of those texts concentrated on aspects of Iron Age cult that struck Greek and Roman observers as bizarre. Consequently, these texts say less about aspects of rituals that seemed more familiar, such as the idea that there was a multiplicity of gods, or that gods should receive sacrifices of the same domesticated species as humans consumed, or that much ritual should revolve around the agricultural year and be organized at household level.

These texts tended to exaggerate both similarities and differences from classical norms. So local deities might be translated by the names of more familiar ones (Ando 2005), or else attention might be focused on human sacrifice even when animal sacrifice was more common (Rives 1995). Occasionally this presents apparent incongruities. Notoriously, the Druids are variously presented as implacable enemies of Rome who practiced horrific human sacrifice *and also* as natural philosophers whose teaching on the transmigration of souls can be compared to those of other wise men stereotypically located near the edge of the earth, such as Indian Brahmins and Ethiopian Gymnosophists. Roman period monuments often (but not always) assimilate deities in ways that preserve a sense of their difference, for example through double naming (such as Mars Lenus or Mercurius Nodens); through assertions of hierogamy between (male) Roman gods and (female) local goddesses; or through portraying local deities with the iconographic attributes of more familiar classical gods such as Hercules. All these documents – literary, epigraphic and iconographic – are products of that cultural encounter around the turn of the millennium; they are hybridizations and translations that can only be understood in the political context of that encounter, and none of them offer disinterested information about the situation prior to Roman expansion.

Conversion to Christianity initiated slower transformations than Roman conquest. Evidence for the destruction of temples and divine images in the northern provinces of the empire clusters in the last decades of the fourth century CE. Beyond the imperial frontiers – in areas such as Germany, southern Scandinavia and Ireland – high-profile conversions were still occurring as late as the end of the first millennium CE. (The first Norse settlers of Iceland in the ninth century CE included worshippers of Thor.) Most accounts of pre-Christian religion in these areas were written much later and in a Christian context. The mediaeval Irish epic poem, the "Táin", is known from eleventh- or twelfth-century manuscripts, although it draws on a written tradition dating back to the seventh century CE, and described an epic age constructed as pagan. The main sources for pagan Scandinavian religion are the works of Snorri Sturluson writing in thirteenth-century Iceland, again drawing on a centuries-old tradition of poetry, some of it contained in the broadly contemporary compilation the *Poetic Edda*. These mediaeval texts are good sources for mythic narratives and for the names and characters of particular deities and heroes, but they are poor guides to rituals, beliefs or the social context of pre-Christian cult practices.

The question of what constitutes an adequate interpretation of ritual is a problem for every kind of religious studies. One difficulty is the potential difference between the (emic) understandings of the participants, and our own (etic) understanding of what was going on. But with the ritual systems of late prehistoric Europe we have to contend with

these additional sets of understandings created by Greek and Roman witnesses and Irish and Scandinavian/Icelandic poets and scholars, and these can be misleading. Many classical authors (e.g., Diodorus 5.31; Cicero *De Divinatione* 1.41) interpret Druidism largely in terms of the Roman notion of divination, whilst Snorri interpreted at least one instance of blood sacrifice to Odin in terms of the Christian notion of expiation (DuBois 2006). Only recently have researchers begun to realize how much allowance must be made for the distortions created by this perspective.

These limitations of the textual evidence mean that archaeology provides by far the best evidence for ritual and cosmology among the northern peoples. Recently, there has been a move away from interpreting evidence for ritual activity in terms suggested by Tacitus, Snorri and other writers, towards attempts to identify ritual activity in the material record. The remainder of this chapter surveys the results of these initiatives.

Small–Scale Societies

Throughout the Iron Age, most of the population of temperate Europe lived in small settlements. Typically this meant some combination of scattered farms and small open villages of around 10 hectares in area (Audouze and Buchsenschutz 1989). In some parts of Europe there were episodes of fortification building, often on hilltops. Even these sites rarely sheltered more than a few hundred permanent residents. The trading centers that began to emerge in southern Scandinavia, southern Britain and northern France during the early mediaeval period were of roughly equivalent size. A small number of much larger nucleated sites – often known as *oppida* – were occupied for a few generations at the end of the Iron Age in an area that extended from eastern France to Bohemia. Their populations may have numbered in the low thousands. The same may be true of the more dispersed settlement concentrations that appear in the same period in some regions of Europe, including eastern and southern Britain and Rumania. None of these had populations larger than the smallest category of Mediterranean city.

The political organization of Iron Age societies is a matter of debate. Most were probably tribes and chiefdoms. The wider groupings recorded in classical accounts of wars and migrations were often fragile and temporary. Whether or not states of some kind existed in Europe prior to the Roman conquest is a matter of debate: the strongest contenders are in central France, but the evidence is slender (Collis 2000). States certainly did not exist in Scandinavia and other parts of northern Europe before the middle of the last millennium CE (Randsborg 1980).

It is not surprising, then, that temperate Europe had little resembling the great public cults of the Mediterranean world, nor the great regional sanctuaries that began to appear from the eighth century BC, broadly contemporary with the rise of the city-state. Perhaps more surprisingly, neither was Iron Age Europe characterized by extensive sacred landscapes like the megalithic complexes created in the Neolithic at Carnac, Callanish and on Salisbury Plain. The first farming communities of Atlantic Europe had devoted great energy to the construction of chambered tombs, stone circles, henge and cursus monuments that involved great earthworks, and processional routes marked by alignments of stones which were occasionally transported long distances and then orientated with some astronomical precision. Their use and elaboration continued into the Bronze Age

in many regions. Traces of Iron Age ritual have been detected at some these sites, but it suggests reuse of monuments rather than continuity, let alone social memory. Despite the much greater human and economic resources available to Iron Age societies, the greater part of the evidence for ritual is localized and small scale. Most ritual activity took place on domestic sites; that is, on farms, in villages, on hill forts and in their associated funerary complexes. It has recently become apparent that late prehistoric populations concentrated much of their energy on ritualizing central aspects of their everyday lives, notably the construction and abandonment of buildings, the burial of the dead and the rhythms of the agricultural cycle (Bradley 2005). Burials of humans and animals are often found in boundary ditches. The entrances of British roundhouses share a particular cosmological orientation (Oswald 1997). It is against this background of ubiquitous domestic ritual activity that we need to interpret a small number of sites of intense cult practice. These included a series of major sanctuaries sometimes within oppida; exceptional deposits of weapons and human remains probably associated with battles; and a few very rich deposits of metalwork that plausibly represent the final outcome of extensive patterns of gift exchange managed across very long distances by the most powerful members of Iron Age societies.

Structured Deposition

Particular attention is currently devoted to what is most often referred to as "structured deposition". Objects and assemblages found in ditches, under floors and especially in pits, and once dismissed as "rubbish", frequently turn out to be the end result of very carefully performed rituals (Hill 1995). Many of the objects underwent very elaborate manipulation, including ritual destruction, prior to deposition. They were then arranged very carefully in combinations and on orientations that seem to follow elaborate rules. This care, elaboration and apparent redundancy of effort through which the mundane is defamiliarized are in all societies the hallmarks of ritualization (Bell 1992; Liénard and Boyer 2006).

The ritualization processes characteristic of the European Iron Age (or at least some of them) have left some distinctive archaeological traces. These include human bodies placed on the very bottom of grain storage pits and then covered with other objects; swords that have been deliberately broken into a number of pieces or else tied into knots; musical instruments that have been carefully rendered unusable; and whole or partial animal skeletons of very particular species, placed on specific orientations or associated with particular objects. The places of deposition were carefully chosen, or else created specifically for these assemblages. The material itself might include human and animal remains, metal tools and weaponry, horse equipment, cooking and eating wares and a very large proportion of the coinage found in archaeological contexts (Haselgrove and Wigg-Wolf 2005). One reason that the significance of these deposits was for so long missed is that both the things deposited and many of the places in which they were deposited had also had conventional mundane uses. But towards the end of their use-life, both objects and their contexts underwent processes of ritualization. Depositional practices of this kind occur on domestic sites, scattered and nucleated; on oppida; and on sanctuary sites such as that at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy (Brunaux 1988, 2000).

Structured deposition often involved the deliberate putting out of use of items of value. They might be destroyed, as in the ritual killing of animals or people, or the breaking of swords. Coins might be deliberately defaced, and amphorae cut into pieces. Objects might be put out of use by being consigned to places from which they could not be recovered, such as river beds or bogs. It is easy to imagine ceremonies by which the powerful converted economic into symbolic capital by orchestrating ritual destructions of wealth, and we can compare these occasions to large communal feasts for which the powerful provided great quantities of meat and imported wine.

But conspicuous consumption provides only a partial explanation for structured deposition, which might in any case be performed on quite a humble scale as well as in a great public gathering. For a start, destruction was only one component of the treatment given to these materials. When animal remains are found in these deposits they are generally articulated or semi-articulate; in other words, entire or partial corpses were deposited rather than the waste products of butchery and feasting. Animal carcasses were occasionally manipulated by the removal of limbs, by decapitation, or by the arrangement of stones or pottery around them. Typically, they were aligned very carefully, facing a particular direction or lying on one side or the other. The general principles of careful selection, manipulation and arrangement were widely observed, and the objects involved are broadly the same across Europe. Yet individual sites and regions varied in precisely which species were selected and exactly how they were arranged: sheep were common at Corent, and cattle further north. Regional variation also applied to deposition of human bodies. Human burials in grain storage pits, for instance, are particularly well known in northern France and southern Britain; elsewhere, they are more likely found in watery sites, and perhaps in other places they were disposed of in elaborate ways that have left no trace. The level of elaboration in the treatment of these items shows that destruction/putting out of use was at best only one among several aims of ritualization processes.

The choice of objects deposited is sometimes suggestive. It is no surprise that weapons were particular objects of cult: iron-working is often associated with magical practices (Hingley 1997). The choice of species deposited was obviously important, as was the age at which they were killed. Horses and dogs were perhaps associated with hunting and particular social classes, or perhaps the fact they were not consumed led to them being treated in similar ways to humans. Swords were closely connected with warrior status in all these societies. At Snettisham in Norfolk (Eastern England) a series of pits contained perhaps as many as 200 torcs made of gold, silver and bronze (Garrow and Gosden 2012). The aggregate value put out of use on this one site is extraordinary. Deposits of elaborate metalwork such as the Battersea shield or gold torcs are perhaps best understood in terms of the generalized use of such valuables in European societies. Assembling the materials for the construction of these objects may well have involved the activation of very long-distance links, and perhaps the expenditure of significant social and economic capital. Acquiring materials and finding craftsmen for their production made them enormously valuable; they were likely exchanged as gifts and passed down as heirlooms, and perhaps invested with part of the personhood of those who used them (ibid.; Garrow, Gosden, and Hill 2008). Putting treasures like these out of use represented an ostentatious renunciation of the social power they might otherwise have conveyed. It is possible to trace some of these uses of metalwork back to the Bronze Age (Bradley 1990). The most extravagant depositions can be thought of as the culmination of processes of extraction,

processing, craftsmanship and exchange that connected communities across Europe. It may not be fanciful to compare such activity to the megalith building of earlier periods.

Other deposits were not so carefully structured but may have been the result of equally elaborate rituals. At the site of La Tène, a wooden bridge over the outlet of Lake Neuchatel was used for the disposal of weapons and human remains. A similar structure recently excavated at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire was used to make offerings through the late Iron Age of weapons, tools and human and animal remains and in the early Roman period of pots and metal vessels (Field and Parker Pearson 2003). Weapons and metalwork have been recovered from major rivers including the Rhône and the Thames. A similar range of material has been recovered from bogs and lakes across northern Europe. Deposits of this kind continue to be attested from the early Roman period. Roman military equipment has been a common find (Haynes 1997; Nicolay 2007). Most recently, attention has been drawn to the continued ritual manipulation of animal remains during the Roman period (Groot 2008).

Rituals of Death

The other main locus of ritual action – alongside structured deposition on settlement sites and the deposit of weapons and other valuables in watery contexts – was in connection with the treatment of the dead. Funerary rituals during the European Iron Age were very diverse by contrast with those of the periods that preceded them, and regional traditions emerge very clearly. Cremation was probably still the most-used means of disposing of the dead, but there were many variations. Two categories of special funerary rite stand out: those that seem to have followed the deliberate killing of individuals, and those funerals accorded to the richest members of Iron Age societies.

The subject of ritual killings is both controversial and well studied (Parker Pearson 1986). Bog bodies, many of which show signs of violent and ritualized murder, have been found in the peat sphagnum bogs of Ireland, Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and northern Germany, where acid conditions prevent the decay of soft material. The victims might be of either sex and can be young or old, often seem not to have undertaken significant manual work during their lives, sometimes had consumed a final meal of fairly unusual ingredients and were killed in a variety of ways including strangulation, stab wounds and perhaps suffocation. All these features suggest a ritualized killing. The bog-bodies probably represent only a fraction of ritual deaths, since classical testimony adds to a range of methods of execution several that would have left no distinctive archaeological trace including burning humans alive. Fragments of human skeletal material mixed in structured depositions are plausibly connected with ritual killings.

Understanding the rationale for ritualized killing of humans is not easy. The notions that Druids killed humans as part of divinatory rituals and that Vikings might make human sacrifices as expiations have been mentioned already. An Arabic account survives of the killing of a female child at a Viking funeral near Kiev. Was this to provide a female slave in the next world (by analogy with wine to drink and weapons to use after death)? Humans might, of course, be simply considered as valuable objects, and so particularly apt objects of destruction just like torcs and swords. Ethnographic parallels remind us of the range of explanations given for human sacrifice. Human victims might be scapegoats

or gifts for the gods or servants for the dead. Some ritual killings were of individuals identified as witches, as those who had transgressed religious rule or simply as outsiders (Wait 1986). If we cannot be sure whether unchaste Vestals were buried alive as a punishment, in expiation for their acts or as a remedial measure to restore an order disrupted by their actions, what hope have we in understanding why this or that Iron Age society conducted the ritual killing of some of its high-status members?

Rich burials, like structured depositions, varied considerably. Local societies often seem to have made their own appropriation from older repertories of funerary ritual (Guichard and Perrin 2002). Inhumation as well as cremation is known, burials were sometimes grouped in enclosures, a few placed in underground chambers, and in rare cases as at Hayling Island, associated with sanctuary sites. A few areas continued wagon-burials, once common across Europe. Some continued the tradition of raising barrows over burials. Burials with rich grave goods were common in most areas, and there is generally a relation of mutual exclusion with other kinds of ritual deposition in the same region. Many of the same objects – weaponry, tools and drinking vessels, for example – appear in both funerary and votive contexts, including human remains, tools and weaponry. It is rare to find the same objects hoarded and used as grave goods in the same society, but common to find one means of deposition replacing the other over time (Bradley 1990).

Collective Rituals

Most prehistoric populations probably gathered in large numbers only rarely, and perhaps most often at time of war. Some of the largest ritual deposits in the archaeological record were probably formed as a sequel to battles between communities or tribes. At Ribemont in Picardy a structure was built to display hundreds of armed corpses (Brunaux 1991). Great quantities of weaponry were found at Hjortspring on the Danish island of Als in a deposit dating to the fourth century BCE (Randsborg 1995; Kaul 2003). A growing number of deposits of this kind have now been documented, many or all perhaps the result of major battles (Jørgensen, Storgaard, and Thomsen 2003; Abegg-Wigg and Rau 2008). A similar monument may have existed on the site of the Varian disaster, but those human remains that have been recovered seem to have been reburied, perhaps by Germanicus' army (Wilbers-Rost et al. 2007). These rituals were exceptional and rare events, although we can easily imagine they were long remembered.

There is, however, little trace of regular large-scale participatory rituals like those that characterized the political life of the classical city (Burkert 1987). The general absence of large structures designed to accommodate audiences has suggested that spectacles did not play as prominent a part in late prehistoric religion as they did in the classical cities of the Mediterranean. A semi-circular structure built of wooden posts very recently found in the hilltop settlement at Corent, near Clermont Ferrand, flanking a large open space (an *esplanade*) could be a structure designed to allow observation of collective rituals (Poux 2012; and the interim report 2011). Constructed in the last decades before the Gallic War it was perhaps modeled on classical theaters, one of which eventually replaced it. At present, it is unique in pre-conquest contexts, but competitive events could have been staged in open spaces or in valleys. The Situla Art, that appears on most

major sites dated to between 650 and 300 BCE in what is now eastern Switzerland, Austria, the Italian Tyrol and Slovenia, depicts not only martial scenes, hunting, and funerary processions but also boxing and chariot racing. The style of these images, although not the bronze buckets on which most appear, suggests connections with Etruria and other Mediterranean societies (Frey 1969; Zaghetto 2007). The musical instrument known as the carnyx, consisting of a long bronze tube and a wide mouth, often elaborately decorated, is often associated with use in battle (as it is portrayed on the Gundestrup Cauldron) but perhaps may have had wider ritual uses, at least in the post-conquest period, and perhaps before as well (Hunter 2001: 96–7). One example was found in a Roman period temple at Mandeure and images of the instrument figure on some altars. Five Iron-Age examples were found recently in the French sanctuary of Tintagnac, in a deposit that also included weapons, helmets and metal standards in the shape of animals, and another was deposited in a bog at Deskford in north-east Scotland.

By far the best evidence for large-scale collective ritual is provided by the remains of communal feasting. Classical testimony included accounts of occasions on which chiefs provided meat and drink for various categories of dependents, perhaps only slightly exaggerated in importance by the interest of Athenaeus whose *Dining Sophists* is the source for many fragments. Fragments of imported wine amphorae are found in very great numbers on most late Iron Age settlements in central France. At Corent, there are signs that wine amphorae were ritually destroyed in and around the sanctuary. Wine amphorae, sometimes enclosing strange deposits such as wild birds, occur in some rich burials. An early Iron Age female burial at Vix in Burgundy contained an enormous crater that was probably made in the Peloponnese.

Feasting equipment was also constructed locally. Roasting spits and firedogs are common finds on late prehistoric sites in France. At Chiseldon in Wiltshire, a ritual deposit of at least a dozen bronze cauldrons, with their contents, was found in 2004. Late Iron Age graves from central France include bronze and pottery drinking equipment, amphorae of wine and even the occasional animal carcass. Large assemblages of animal bones on some north European sites have been interpreted as the remains of feasting. Hosting feasts, like elaborate funerals, might have provided the powerful with ways of converting their wealth into social esteem (Dietler 2005). It is more difficult to know what cosmological resonances such events may have had, although there is increasing evidence that major ritual events were concentrated at particular times of years including the midwinter solstice (Parker Pearson 2006).

The sacrifice of animals in the classical world is regularly linked with the consumption of meat. Doubtless some prehistoric feasting was associated with sacrifice to the gods: huge numbers of sheep were apparently slaughtered and butchered around the open spaces in the center of oppidum at Corent, and cattle in the corresponding areas of the Titelberg. The range of skeletal material from the Titelberg suggests that some meat was transported off-site for consumption elsewhere (Méniel 2008). But in at least some cases, animals were slaughtered and not consumed. This is especially evident with the slaughter and ritual deposition of horses. A series of deposits outside the oppidum of Vertault (Côte-d'Or) and the small Roman town that replaced it, include articulated remains of horses and dogs, which were not butchered and were orientated in a particular directions (Bénard 2010: 125–33). The horse burials – usually in pairs or trios but on one occasion numbering 10 individuals – were carried out over the last two centuries BCE and the first CE.

A number lie underneath the Gallo-Roman temple. Dog burials – at least 200 were deposited at Vertault – are apparently a feature of the Roman period. Carcasses of older cattle, also not butchered, were deposited in elaborate ways in the sanctuary of Gournay (Méniel 2008). The different treatment of animals normally eaten and those not eaten (in which we should include sacrificed humans) suggests a conceptual differentiation of rituals that perhaps corresponded to a differentiation among living beings.

Sanctuaries

Processes of ritualization did on occasion mark particular places as sacred (Brunaux 1991; Haffner 1995). Most sanctuaries were quite small, although the long period over which some were used has resulted in rich deposits.

One example is provided by the offerings of human and animal remains, pottery and tools thrown into a pool surrounded with fenced enclosures at Oberdorla in Thuringia. The site was used for over one thousand years. Unusually, a series of wooden images that originally surrounded the pool have been recovered. Deposits of this kind were not rare, but it is only occasionally that it is possible to reconstruct their original setting in this way. Classical testimony provides several accounts of sacred lakes and springs, such as the stories about the gold deposited in the Lake of Tolosa and allegedly plundered by the Roman general Caepio. Cult was paid at river sources and rivers were treated as deities in Greek and Roman culture, of course, and it is not always easy to be sure whether post-conquest cult reflects local ideas, Roman ones or both. Some early medieval Irish texts suggest that lakes might be seen as entrances to other worlds, and the story of Beowulf suggests some such locations may have been seen as the homes of threatening beings. Might the bottom of pits and ditches also have been viewed as key points of contact between different worlds? Other kinds of spatial liminality certainly attracted particular types of ritual: the deposits found at enclosure ditches of farmsteads and hill forts are a case in point.

Specialized religious structures are rare in Iron Age Europe but there are places where sanctuaries have been identified. The pool at Oberdorla had very little architectural elaboration: perhaps many shrines were like that. A group of sanctuaries have been identified in northern France (Brunaux 1991). Best known is Gournay-sur-Aronde where a sequence of enclosures was focused on a pit which, after a period of disuse, became the site of a Gallo-Roman temple. The rituals conducted here seem to have involved the ritual killing and display of domesticated animals. Unlike many instances of structured deposition some of the carcasses in question were left in the open air for some time.

Another group of sites once identified as sanctuaries are the so-called Viereckschanzen of central Europe; these were square enclosures with low raised banks, several of which have produced evidence for ritual deposits (Buchsenschutz and Olivier 1989). But their interpretation as sanctuaries has become controversial, partly because of the discovery of domestic waste within some enclosures, partly because sites allocated to this category vary considerably in form, and partly because the ubiquity of ritual action on domestic sites makes the deposits in square enclosures seem less significant. The utility of the category is seriously in doubt. Elaborate pit deposits have been discovered on several sites, and on some hill forts from southern Britain to central Europe various structures

have been identified as shrines (Haffner 1995). It has become more common to seek continuities between Iron Age structures and the more distinctive temple-types of the western provinces. Many Gallo-Roman fana seem to be located above sites of pre-Roman activity: often, as at Vertault, no structures have been identified in the prehistoric levels, but this may reflect the move from post-built to stone-built shrines. At Gournay, there is a clear link between the Iron Age sanctuary and a Roman shrine, many former oppida are the sites of Gallo-Roman temples and occasionally, as at Hayling Island or in the hillfort of Corent, something like a Roman temple appears in the final Iron Age occupation periods. But in many other regions nothing similar has been identified. Perhaps, as with funerary rituals and structures, we should envisage highly variable local appropriations from a continent-wide repertoire of ritual forms and practices.

Interpretating Late Prehistoric Ritual

The interpretations that have emerged from the careful contextual archaeology of the last few decades have transformed our view of both Iron Age societies and also Iron Age rituals to the point where neither is now discussed without reference to the other (e.g., Hill and Cumberpatch 1995; Gwilt and Haselgrove 1997). Yet it remains difficult to be certain about how all this ritual activity related to belief. The life- or use-cycles of buildings also seems to have been marked by rituals, and the foundation deposits of buildings and the deposition of human bodies and other objects in grain storage pits has also been mentioned. Did rituals conducted near the end of the use-period of a storage pit aim to ensure a continuation of fertility? The association between the burials of individuals and the storage of grain has suggested to some that connections were made between the annual agricultural cycle and the social reproduction of the community (Bradley 2005). Was the burial in the ground of bodies, seeds and treasure on the one hand seen as a means of guaranteeing the appearance of new crops and wealth from the earth? The connection to astronomical cycles makes this seem likely. But it is difficult to be sure.

It is even more difficult to link these practices with the cosmologies attributed to various northern peoples by classical and Christian writers. It would be bizarre if there were no continuities between Iron Age practice and the ways in which their religious world views were translated in antiquity and the middle ages. Yet the difficulty of interpreting as rich an iconographic source as the Gundestrup Cauldron should perhaps be a salutary warning. All the same, the energy devoted to the Roman translation of prehistoric deities into familiarized hybrids should remind us of the enduring hold of these deities on the imagination and of the great gap there was to be bridged between the religious traditions of the Mediterranean world and those of temperate Europe.

Guide to Further Reading

The best succinct guides to the pre-Roman ritual traditions of Britain, France and Germany are Wait (1986), Brunaux (1988), Todd (2004), and Goudineau (2006). For Scandinavia see Hedeager (1992) and Andrén, Jennbert, and Raudvere (2006). The most thoughtful analyses are contained in Bradley (1990, 2005). Those primarily interested in

the Roman period sequel should consult Derks (1998) and Van Andringa (2002). An idea of the great range of approaches to this material is given by the papers collected by Häussler and King (2008).

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CHAPTER 36

Tracing Religious Change in Roman Africa

Valentino Gasparini

Introduction

For an archaeology of religion in the ancient world, the African side of the Mediterranean is as interesting in its own right as in the opportunity thus offered to observe processes of religious change.

It is a given that ancient North Africa cannot be treated as a monolithic block. Its history is closely linked to its Mediterranean shores, whose coastline reaches a length of almost five thousand kilometers from eastern Libya to the Atlantic Ocean, thus representing a sort of bridge connecting the East to the West (Shaw 2003). Therefore, it is evident that the factors shaping the local cultural networks changed significantly according to different times and different areas: for instance, on a large scale, the influence either of Egypt on Cyrenaica, Sicily on Punic Carthage or the Iberian Peninsula on Mauretania Tingitana.

Moreover, the limits marking off this wide area were not sharp frontiers. The sea coast (exposed to and involved in a very intense movement of goods, people, ideas and cults) constituted, from this point of view, a link more than a boundary. And even the southern Roman *limes* has to be interpreted as an elastic zone of local contacts, exchanges, interactions and, sometimes, clashes, rather than a clear dividing line (Trousset 2004; Hilali 2011).

Finally, inside of this extensive territory, the population was the complex result of a rich stratification of ethnic and cultural layers, among which those corresponding to the names of Africans, Arabs, Baquates, Berbers, Gaetulians, Greeks, Libyans, *Mauri*, Numidians, Phoenicians, Punics, Romans and Vandals are only the most historically macroscopic.

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Old and New Methodological Approaches

For a long period (Sebaï 2005), modern European colonialism has generated a historical interpretative model conceiving the Roman conquest of Africa as the imperialistic and hegemonic expression of an "advanced" culture facing the resistance of an "underdeveloped" one (Bénabou 1976, 1978). Attempting to rescue the notion of Roman-ness from that previous distorted view and to develop a post-colonial approach (Thébert 1978; Leveau 1978), a labels' controversy has been started, trying to replace the word "Romanization" with terms such as "Hybridization" (Van Dommelen 1997), "Creolization" (Webster 2001), "Globalization" (Hingley 2005) and "Rome's Cultural Revolution" (Wallace-Hadrill 2008), each subject to intensive debate.

This is on the brink of a sterile nominalistic effort. Indeed, Romanization (as well as Punicization, Hellenization or even Arabization) is not an ancient word and, among the authors of the Roman epoch, there was not an organic meditation concerning this issue. The sources seem not to have been conscious of its development process. Nevertheless, on the one hand they were conscious of its political result: the concept of "Self-Romanization" was, for example, well-known by Tacitus (*Agricola* 21), not as a deliberate policy of acculturation, imposed by the central power and explicitly operated, but as an integration generated by the conquest and a spontaneous adhesion of the individuals to the cultural parameters of the main political and economical referent. On the other hand, the same sources seem to be very careful on the process of allogeneization of Rome, stressing the contribution given to Roman-ness by the conquered people. Actually, Romanization was a process that the Romans were aware of. And though this modern term inevitably risks hiding some ambiguities (as Rome's hegemonic role, for example), its elasticity and polysemy still reflects the complexity of the phenomenon much better than other attempts (*contra* Crawley Quinn 2003).

Coming up with the very core of this paper, the phenomenon of Romanization and religious appropriation in North Africa is much more varied and individual than it has been theorized. From a historical bird's-eye view, it could seem undeniable that important changes in individual religious interests were influenced by social status and collective identities. Yet, if we focus (using a sort of magnifying glass, i.e., archaeology) on the very everyday life, the networks where individual actors were embedded clearly turn out to have guided, but not determined their cultural standards and their cultic personal tastes.

The processes of cultic exchange can be fully understood only by combining these two different perspectives: this means analyzing under which different epochs, conditions and circumstances the phenomenon took place, who were the social components involved, to which particular dynamics these agents did respond and, finally, with which mechanisms of inclusion or exclusion the individual religious appropriation interacted with the role played by the cults' religious specialists and associations. In plain words: who introduced or changed the gods? What places and times did changes take place first of all? Who benefited from this? Who lost out? And so on. It is the claim of this chapter to try to highlight some of these aspects, supported by specific case studies.

Sources

We do not own a large number of Punic, Greek and Roman texts relating to North African religion. Yet, some of these are of paramount importance for our knowledge of pre-Roman and Roman religious pluralism and of the political, cultural and social contexts the cultic agents belonged to: among others, Appian, Diodorus of Sicily, Livy, Pliny the Elder, Polybius, Pomponius Mela, Ptolemy and Sallustius. Some authors of the imperial period, in particular Apuleius and Fronto, are even more important and rich in details. Finally, several authors provide for other precious information from a Christian perspective, like Augustine, Cyprian, Martianus Capella, Minucius Felix and Tertullian.

Yet the exceptional abundance of epigraphic material in North Africa (around 7000 Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions, not much less than 5000 Greek ones and as many as 57,000 Latin *tituli*) renders it, probably, the most important archaeological instrument in the analysis of the evolution of the religious–historical dynamics.

Coins have been used only occasionally in the study of the North African religion. Unfortunately, the African numismatic emissions (Alexandropoulos 2007) stopped with the period of Caligula and, if their use is meaningful for what concerns aspects linked with the institutionalized cults, their importance for the study of "lived ancient religion" is quite limited.

Finally, the topographical, architectural and, generally, archaeological features of the sanctuaries, the traces of domestic worship, the iconography of statues and reliefs (e.g., the so-called "La Ghorfa" stelae) and then mosaics, lamps, etc. offer fundamental elements to the understanding of everyday North African religious life.

Re-Interpreting Old Gods

Detecting signs of lived religion in pre-Roman North Africa is a hard challenge. The literary sources are mostly silent and the material linked with the local Libyo-Berber gods is very sporadic and quite late, suggesting the long persistence and rootedness but, at the same time, the almost total archaeological invisibility of the pre-Roman religious tradition.

In the most favorable circumstances, we just know the names of these gods (not more than fifty deities) and how they were represented. From this point of view, *Vaga* (Béja) is a particularly interesting case, since – on the one hand – a relief of the third-century CE still shows the figures of seven pre-Roman deities, even quoting their corresponding names: Bonchor, Iunam, Macurgum, Macurtam, Matilam, Varsissima and Vihinam (AE 1948.114; see Merlin 1947; Camps 1954, 1990; Fentress 1978). On the other hand, another inscription (*CIL* 8.10564) in the same town testifies the presence of a *Graeca Ceres*, which seems to be differentiated from the *Cereres Punicae* testified in *Mactaris* (*AE* 1951.55) or with the *Ceres Africana*, whose priestesses were devoted to celibacy (Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis* 13; see Gaspar 2011). And, at the same time, a further inscription (*CIL* 8.14392) testifies the restoration of the *aedes* of the Roman goddess Tellus (closely linked to the cult of the *Cereres*) by Marcus Titurnius Africanus in 2 BCE, suggesting its construction at least already in the same years of Octavian's

re-founding of Carthage. Varro (Divine Antiquities fr. 16) informs us about the importance, during the first century BCE, of the cult of Tellus, who was included among the Roman "outstanding and select gods". Indisputably, the arrival of the Romans in North Africa after the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE involved a sharp change of the local culture and the introduction of new gods with new names, new priests, a new religious vocabulary, a new sacred architecture, etc. But this did not delete the previous Libyo-Punic identity, which strongly survived for a long time.

This persistence is clearly represented by the ritual of the *molk*. According to the sources, Carthage was founded in 817–6 or 814–3 BCE (Velleius 1.6.4 and 1.12.5). The ruins of its *tophet* are among the most ancient Punic archaeological material found in North Africa: its first phase is dated back to the mid-eighth century BCE. This sacred area, placed in the quarter of Salammbô and dedicated to the main divine couple of Baal Hammon and Tanit, hosted for centuries the remains of the infants immolated to the gods through their sacrifice on the fire (*molk*) and of the animals (lambs or kids) which could be alternatively substituted to them. These remains were buried into an urn, whose presence was usually indicated by a stele inscribed with the name of the victim. The *molk* sacrifice was widely spread for example in *Cirta* (El-Hofra), *Thuburnica* (Sidi Ali Belkassem), *Thugga* (Dougga), *Utica* (Bordj Bou Chateur), etc., and this custom went on for a long time, even until the third century CE, as testified by Tertullian (*Apology* 9.2–3) and by the excavations of the *tophet* of *Mactaris* (Mactar).

In the meantime, the Carthaginian gods were integrated among the deities of Rome under a more-or-less thick Roman varnish (Le Glay 1975; Cadotte 2007): Baal Hammon survived in his equivalent Saturnus, and Tanit was translated as Caelestis. This is the reason why, for example, a priest, Lucius Magnius Felix Remmianus, was pressed to raise in *Thugga* (*CIL* 8.26474) a statue of *Iuno Regina* on order (*ex praecepto*) of the goddess *Caelestis Augusta*. And at *Mastar*, M[...] Fortunatus offered a dedication (*CIL* 8.6353) to Jupiter (almighty and guardian of the Emperors) on order (*ex imperato*) of *dominus Saturnus*. It is quite difficult not to recognize that these two inscriptions explicitly hint at the equivalence of these gods and, consequently, show an attempt to offer a Latin translation of the most prominent Punic divine couple, i.e., Baal Hammon and Tanit (Schörner 2007; Goddard 2010; Lancellotti 2010; Groslambert 2011). This *interpretatio romana* (concept inspired by the words of Tacitus, *Germania* 43.4) was not systematically guided by a central power. It produced further complexities, which multiplied exponentially the regional, local and even individual interpretations, including both equivalences among deities and distinctions inside single gods.

At *Mons Balcaranensis*, for example, there was an important temple of Saturnus Balcaranensis, whose epithet directly comes from the Phoenician Baal Qarnaïm, the "double horned" Baal, referring to the mountain of Djebel Bou Kornine, which ends with a double top evoking the shape of two horns (Toutain 1892; Le Glay 1961: 32–73; Cadotte 2007: 519–21). The sanctuary, according to the Punic architecture, was constituted by a simple enclosure, probably built in the first century CE and active till the fourth century CE. Its excavation at the end of the nineteenth century has delivered significant material such as the potteries related to the offering of fruits and cakes (one of these pots, placed at the feet of the stelai, was found intact with some bones of a bird inside), the *unguentaria*, small vessels containing the perfumes ritually poured on the flame of the altar, around sixty lamps used during the rites, several coins and, in particular,

more than six hundred votive stelai. The priest Caius Alfius Quadratus chose that place to honor the god with his offering. In the inscription (*CIL* 8.24147) he decided, but – significantly – only in a second attempt, to specify that his dedication was directed to Saturnus Neapolitanus (i.e., of *Neapolis*, nowadays Nabeul, where presumably he held his office). This addition well expresses the clear consciousness of the unity of the figure of the African Saturnus but, at the same time, even a sort of parochial need of addressing the dedication to the hypostasis of the god linked to the votary's own place of origin *(Neapolis),* and not to the local *Mons Balcaranensis.*

In a different way, Candidus son of Balsamon decided to grant the space where the people of *Gens Bacchuiana* (Bou Djelida) built a temple to *Saturnus Achaiae* (evidently the Greek Kronos), for the benefit (*pro salute*) of the Emperor Antoninus Pius (Poinssot 1962). The presence of Kronos in *Cirta* already in the pre-Roman epoch (Gsell 1922: no. 2.509–10) and the Punic onomastics of the dedicant's patronymic have led Marcel Le Glay (1961: 123–4) to interpret this dedication as a will of Greco-Punicization, contrary to the phenomenon of Romanization expressed by a parallel tendency of a return to Roman sources.

At the same time, some Roman deities (mostly disappeared in the Roman Empire) were strongly revitalized in North Africa: this is what happened, at the end of the second–beginning of the third century CE, to old Italic gods (Cadotte 2012), linked to agriculture and fertility, such as Janus and Ops. Some others deities recovered prerogatives that they had lost by then: this is the case of Neptune (Petitmengin 1967; Cadotte 2002), to whom again, as the Italic god or the Greek Poseidon himself, lordship not only over the sea but also over the fresh and spring water is attributed. Yet, in contrast with Le Glay's opinion, this double trend of return to the past (either the one belonging to the tradition of Greece and Magna Graecia or the one of Italy and Rome) seems to have reflected not a deliberate choice of one of the coin's sides (Punic or Roman), but just a symptom of the wide range of options and alternatives created by the coexistence of different cultural traditions, which the individual choice could refer to.

This process of recovery included even ancient linguistic formulas, now sometimes used to translate Punic rituals. For example, at *Niciuibus* (N'Gaous), as many as five stelai dedicated to Saturnus (*AE* 1931.58–60; *CIL* 8.4468; Cadotte 2007: 630, n. 399) used old-fashioned Latin formulas to describe the terms of a substitutionary sacrifice (*mochomor*, *morchomor* or *molchomor*), heir of the Punic *mlk ʿmr* for Baal Hammon performed in the *tophet*, through which, as we have seen, the dedicants offered usually a lamb instead of a human infant. Nevertheless, in other occurrences, some names and titles, that would seem to have been inherited from archaic Roman priesthoods, are in actual fact the result of the adaptation of Punic terms. This holds true, e.g., of the title of *rex sacrorum* (testified still in the third century CE at *Altava* – Ouled Mimoun, *Caesarea* – Cherchel and *Lambaesis* – Lambese), which maybe translates the Punic *ʿdr* ʿ*zrm*, "in charge of the oaths".

The traditional Roman deities, in contact with these local gods and facing these processes of translation, did not remain indifferent to them and were influenced too. This is what we now use to label as the *interpretatio africana* of the Roman gods (Cadotte 2007: *passim*).

The case of Venus is quite exemplary in this regard. The epiclesis of *Erucina*, with which she is invoked at Carthage (*CIL* 8.24528), *Madauros* (Gsell 1922: no. 1.2069)

and *Thibilis* (*AE* 1908.8), directly links the goddess (through the intermediation of Erice in Sicily) with the Phoenician Astarte, whose presence is documented in Carthage by two other inscriptions (Renan et al. 1881–1962: no. 1.3776 and 4910). One of these belongs to a slave of *Astarte Ericina*, who was probably a sacred prostitute, as it has been suggested for Baricca, *Veneris serva* at *Sicca Veneria* (*CIL* 8.15946), where the custom of holy prostitution is widely documented by the literary sources. As many as four dedications to Venus are made by *quattuor publica Africae* (i.e., the customs officers of Africa). Among these, significantly, the dedication from *Lepcis Magna* (*AE* 1952.62) gives to the goddess the epithet of *Adquisitrix* and the attributes of Mercury (that is, a caduceus and a bag). Venus herself had the force of generating and attracting more specific epiclesis linked to the worship of much more closed groups of devotees, on a familial or professional base. See the *Venus Cassiana* of *Lepcis Magna* (*AE* 1926.165), as well as *Caelestis Graniana* of Haut-Mornag (Cagnat, Merlin, and Chatelain 1923: no. 345) or *Pollux Extricatianus* of *Thuburbo Maius* (no. 253).

Evidently, this process of re-shaping North African pre-Roman, Greek and Roman gods was not fully into the hands of individual preferences. The relationship between religious specialists and sacrificing devotees, for example, seems to have been carefully regulated already in the Punic epoch by public decrees (*b't* in the Punic language), which provided for a certain amount of silver *shekels* as a fee for every kind of sacrificed animal, even specifying which part of the victims' corpse had to be given to the priests and which one to the dedicant. This is testified by six sacrificial tariffs. The most important, found in 1844 in the old harbor of Marseille, comes from the temple of Baal *Saphon* at Carthage (Renan et al. 1881–1962: no. 1.165), whilst the others (no. 1.166–7; 3915–7) represent more concise and fragmentary versions of the same. We are quite well informed about some everyday aspects of the sacrificial practices, which included the offering of incenses and perfumes, cakes, fruits and vegetables, testified for example in *Althiburos* (Médeïna: see Donner and Röllig 1966–9: no. 159.8), as well as bloody immolations either of livestock (cattle, calf, goats and he-goats, rams, lambs and fawns), rodents or birds.

Religious specialists went on taking care of regulating the chaotic heterogeneity of the immolations dedicated to the different gods even in the Roman epoch, precisely prescribing what had to be given to whom. Two inscriptions from *Idicra* (*CIL* 8.8246–7) and a third one from *Pagus Veneriensis* (*CIL* 8.27763) suggest the votaries to sacrifice a ram to Jupiter and Testimonius, a kid to Silvanus and Mercury, a goat to Pluto and Minerva, a lamb and/or a bull to Saturnus, a ewe lamb to Nutrix and Tellus, a lamb or a capon to Hercules, either a ewe lamb, a goat or a chicken to Venus and, finally, a rooster to Caelestis.

Other devotees, however, decided not to respect these canonical prescriptions of offerings but to make donations which were, without doubt, much more original and charged of a clear mythological meaning. It is the case of two dedications of a couple of elephant tusks to Liber Pater from *Oea* – Tripoli (*CIL* 8.11001) and *Lepcis Magna* – Lebda (*AE* 1942.3.2). In the latter, Pudens, father of a Roman senator, consecrates his gift to the god, invoked as *Iouigena* (i.e., born from Jupiter, with reference to the myth of the birth of Dionysos, corresponding to Liber in Greece). With a not hidden opportunism, the dedicant qualifies the god as protector of the emperor Septimius Severus (*Lar Severi*), who, in his turn, is defined by Pudens as his own sun (*sol meus*).

Some of the cultic prescriptions were not just suggested to the individual votaries, but apparently even imposed. An inscription from *Mactaris* – Mactar (*CIL* 8.11796) is significant in this sense for two reasons. On the one hand, it bans everybody from moving the statue of Diana out of the temple and even from touching it. On the other hand, the author of the dedication, the *procurator Augusti* Sextus Iulius Possessor, baldly admits that his gift obeys to a not better specified *lex* without which, he insists, he would never had wanted to dedicate that statue.

Other interdictions concerned the life inside of the sanctuary. At *Thuburbo Maius* (Hr. Kasbat), a few years after the dedication of a temple of Mercury *pro salute* of the emperor Hadrian (*AE* 1961.71), Lucius Numisius Vitalis built another *podium* on the orders of Aesculapius (Cagnat, Merlin, and Chatelain 1923: no. 225). The entry to the sanctuary (strictly with bare feet) required at least three days of abstaining from sexual activity, pork meat, broad beans, haircuts and frequenting public baths.

A further interdiction (or, at least, a recommended custom) entailed the abstinence from wine, which two inscriptions from *Aquae Caesaris* – Youks (*CIL* 8.16752) and *Tipasa* – Tifech (*CIL* 8.10832) deal with. In the latter, the priest Ulpius Namphamo, dedicant of the temple, consecrates his offering to Hercules and Victoria Regina (*numen* of Hadrian), boasting about not having drunk wine for 123 years (*sic*!).

Introducing New Gods

Besides the Imperial cult (Rives 2001; Smadja 2005, 2011), the specific permeability of North African religion involved the reception also of other gods, including those belonging to the artificial category of the so-called "Oriental cults" (Bricault 2005; Gavini 2008).

The largest part of these testimonies is related to the *gens isiaca*: Isis and Serapis, but also Anubis, Apis, Harpocrates and Osiris. The introduction of these deities in North Africa had taken place already in the pre-Roman epoch. In the third century BCE, Carthage had already witnessed the presence of Egyptian deities, hosting a shrine of Isis (*RICIS* 703/0101), whose *uraei* appeared in the coinage during the First Punic War (264–241 BCE). Nevertheless, the Isiac divinities seem not to have ever been particularly appreciated in Carthage, even if, according to the numismatic evidence, they were usefully recognized by a parallel Punic tradition as a sign of individualization against the political and economic hegemonies: the Carthaginian one during the Libyan rebellion of 241–238 BCE; the Roman one when the islands of Sicily, Pantelleria and Malta were integrated as provinces at the end of the third century BCE. Therefore, an Egyptian goddess could be used into a Punic tradition as a brand of distinction both from the Carthaginian and Roman hegemony (Gasparini 2011–2).

Yet the actual rooting of these cults in North Africa began at least in the mid-first century BCE at *Sabratha* (Sabrata), and in the Augustan age, at *Thaenae* (Henchir Thyna) and *Iol* (Cherchel). The presence of the Egyptian gods became really significant only from the end of the first century (with the Flavian dynasty) and during the second and third centuries CE (with the Antonins and Severs in particular). It is an old-fashioned *cliché* that the Isiac cults were typical of the army. Yet, despite the strong military presence in North Africa, the soldiers were neither particularly interested in the Isiac nor in the Phrygian cults (Le Bohec 2000).

The dynamics of rooting of these cults sensibly differ. The spread of the Isiac and Phrygian cults followed mostly the same chronological dynamics, but the result of their distribution was very different from a topographical point of view. In fact, the Phrygian cults (intimately connected with the cult of the Emperor) spread quite homogeneously in the territory, reaching also small centers even far from the coast and relatively Romanized cities (Bricault 2005: 297) and leaving many testimonies also in private contexts. The Isiac cults, instead, even if much more frequently archaeologically attested, did not reach a parallel rootedness in the territory and remained mostly limited to the main harbors and the most Romanized cities. And inside these centers, the remains related to domestic worship are quite rare if compared with the quantity of material concerning sanctuaries. After all, the Isiac deities were basically perceived as very Roman official gods, and did not enjoy a strong popular support.

Only the religious iconographies of the oil lamps seem to go against this trend. Indeed, if we analyze this class of material, it is quite surprising, on the one hand, to meet a good number of exemplars related to the isiac gods and, on the other hand, the almost total lack of iconographies relating to Saturnus and Caelestis.

Nevertheless, the local cultural backgrounds probably influenced some features of the Metroac cult, the cult of the "Great Mother". The study of the inscriptions mentioning the rituals of *taurobolia* and *criobolia* in North Africa has brought Laurent Bricault (2005: 294) to underline how the traditional distinction, according to which the *taurobolia* were reserved to the Mater Magna and the *criobolia* to Attis, is not respected in North Africa. This particular trend (very exceptional in the rest of the Roman Empire) could represent both a result of the economic power of the devotees and a consequence of the importance of the ram in Berber culture.

Soldiers preferred collective cults for Roman traditional deities rather than personal (even if soteriological) ones, such as Isis and Cybele. However, it is undeniable that Mithras and Sol Invictus fascinated the army and the high hierarchies involved, in particular, in the most militarized regions such as Numidia. Their cult prepared, at its turn, the bases for the spread, during the second half of the second century CE, of as many as seven other male deities strongly linked to the military world, who are attested by almost thirty-five testimonies mostly coming from Numidia (28, including 20 from *Lambaesis*): from the Commagene Juppiter Dolichenus, from Heliopolis Juppiter Heliopolitanus, from Palmira Malagbel, Iehrobol and Iorchobol, and then Juppiter Bazosenus and Bonus Puer. The introduction of these cults appears closely related to the degree of Romanization, since they never touched the African people and their spread involved the most Romanized part of the population, and in particular the municipal élites and the Imperial officials.

Finally, the introduction of Christianity (Lassère 2005; Tilley 2006; Rebillard 2009) is archaeologically testified in North Africa just from the mid-third century CE but, thanks to few literary accounts which date back to the end of the second–beginning of the third century CE (*Martyrium Perpetuae et Felicitatis*; *Martyrium Scillitanorum*; Minucius Felix; Tertullian), it is possible to infer some information concerning the first steps of its development. The vectors which instigated this process are unknown. According to the different interpretations, the rise of Christianity in North Africa has been connected with Rome, with some Jewish communities set around Carthage (Stern 2008) or, finally, to a spontaneous local phenomenon. It is probably sensible to conclude for a multiple origin.

Despite this continuous interaction between the rich religious specter and Christianity, the vitality of the latter still lasted for centuries. Indeed, Augustine died in 430 in Numidia and Roman Africa ended just nine years later, when the king Gaiseric took Carthage. Nevertheless, Christian epitaphs are documented during both the Vandal (429–533) and Byzantine (533–698) occupations, trespassing the Arab conquest (achieved in 711) and even reaching the tenth and eleventh centuries.

In conclusion, through the centuries North African pluralism faced a very dynamic religious appropriation and a constant negotiation between old and new cultic traditions. The persistence and rootedness of Libyo-Berber and Punic gods, on the one hand, and the introduction of Roman "traditional" and new "foreign" deities, on the other, exponentially increased the range of individual religious options and the processes of interference, exchange, differentiation, distinction, stratification and integration in the religious landscape of Roman Africa. This significantly affected, enriched and multiplied divine attributes, onomastics, epiclesis, religious architectures and liturgies.

Guide to Further Reading

Besides the already-mentioned bibliography, the study of the ancient religions in North Africa still cannot be treated regardless of the epochal works of Picard (1954) and Lipiński (1995). Brouquier-Reddé (1992) and Rives (1995) offer still good perspectives on specific regional contexts like Tripolitania and Carthage. On the role of the army in the evolution of North African cults see, for instance, Cadotte (2009). Finally, Benseddik (2010) and Cadotte (2003) represent some of the interesting recent researches on specific cults and epithets.

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