

## Hellenistic

**Milena Melfi and Olympia Bobou (eds)**  
***Hellenistic Sanctuaries between Greece and Rome*. pp. xvi+326, 54 illustrations.**  
**2016. Oxford: Oxford University Press.**  
**ISBN 978-0-19-965413-0. £97.00.**

This volume deals with the period from 300 BC to AD 100. The sixteen chapters, all in English, arise from an Oxford conference in September 2010 taking the post-Classical polis sanctuary in Greece, Sicily and Magna Graecia as its focus. The main disciplinary emphasis is on classical archaeology and art; two chapters (Yves Lafond; Maria Kantirea) foreground epigraphy; another includes an excavator's unpublished note revealing a new inscription about Damophon of Messene (Melfi in the second of her three contributions). The chapters are not grouped thematically, although two sub-divisions stand out: one dealing with broader topics and regions, and the other focused on a particular polis or sanctuary.

In the former category, two chapters discuss Hellenistic patterns of dedication, especially of sculpture. Joannis Mylonopoulos takes divine images (including, but not limited to, so-called cult statues) and offers a nuanced analysis of Hellenistic trends, emphasising that what are sometimes seen as Hellenistic innovations, such as 'effeminacy' in the depiction of male divinities, are often anticipated in earlier sculpture or the 'minor arts'. She gives good reasons for qualifying a modern notion that the Hellenistic placing of temple statues increasingly emphasised 'aesthetic delight' (p. 122). On the other hand, in an (editorially unintentional) demonstration of how difficult it is to generalise about Hellenistic art, Olympia Bobou, on grounds that are also persuasive, points to Hellenistic sanctuaries as increasingly the setting for statuary 'not immediately connected to the worshipped deity' (p. 190), citing *i.a.* Herondas's well-known fourth mime, where the response of 'Kokkale' and 'Kynno' to offerings in the temple is, precisely, aesthetic. Aestheticism and religiosity were not of course mutually exclusive, and, for the later period, as well as Pausanias, noted by Bobou, Aelius Aristides is informative on the ancient experience of viewing sacred statues.<sup>1</sup>

Yves Lafond looks at religious euergetism in the Peloponnesian poleis of the first centuries BC to AD and rightly concludes that the civic elites had now come to dominate 'polis religion', although this conclusion perhaps needs more reflection on reasons why and, specifically, on the Roman context (the reviewer returns to this point below). Annalisa Lo Monaco's good chapter on Roman magistrates and Greek sanctuaries includes illumination of the notorious Greek civic practice of rededicating to Romans older statue monuments: she argues that in honorific terms what mattered were the prominence of the location and 'the fame of the artist', whose signature was left on view – an insight surely, if true, into Roman taste as well as Greek expediency.

Of the chapters focused on individual sites, three discuss archaeological work in progress: Björn Forsén on the Arkadian sanctuary of Artemis Lykoatis; Elisabetta Interdonato on the Kos Asklepieion (see now her book, *L'Asklepieion di Kos: archeologia del culto*, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Rome 2013); and Lorenzo Campagna on the Santa Caterina site in Taormina. As for the rest, two focus on Hellenistic cult in respectively Kameiros (Luigi M. Calì) and Demetrias (Sofia Kravaritou). Maria Kantirea's chapter operates as a case study (Lykosoura) in the type of euergetism discussed by Lafond. Jessica Piccinini plausibly re-identifies Dakaras's miscellaneous 'temples' at Dodona as Hellenistic treasuries offered by states in NW Greece. Melfi studies the commissions of the Messenian sculptor Damophon from cities on Greece's Adriatic coast as far north as Butrint. Finally, two papers offer contrasting views of the impact on older Greek cults of Roman colonisation at, respectively, Corinth (Melfi again) and Tauromenium (Campagna), the former impact seen as essentially benign, the latter not so.

Two authors misdate (pp. 5–6; 20) the famous inscription about the Andania Mysteries, which, more recently, the late Christian Habicht confirmed must be assigned to AD 23/24;<sup>2</sup> that is, the context for this extraordinary cultic initiative is, not Late Hellenistic, as used to be thought, but Early Imperial. This datum bears on a more general point. Melfi rightly gives prominence in her introduction to current approaches to so-called 'polis-religion', although these tend to focus on Archaic and Classical times. Increasingly researchers are now turning the spotlight on Greek civic religion under

<sup>1</sup> See Petsalis-Diomidis 2010

<sup>2</sup> Habicht 2015. in *A&ON. Studies in Honor of Ronald S. Stroud*, Athens 2015, 515–529: cp. *BÉ* 2016 no. 207

Roman domination, as this collection itself shows.<sup>3</sup> Some of the fundamental modes of Graeco-Roman acculturation are touched on here, not least by Melfi herself: e.g. in seeing subordinate poleis using Greek cult to communicate with the dominant power, and the agency of ‘the taste of the Romans’ in shaping Greek cultic changes (p. 104; also pp. 249–50, a discussion that perhaps could be taken further, to suggest the moralising impact of the Augustan regime on Greek cults of Aphrodite previously practising sacred prostitution). What is needed now, this reviewer ventures to suggest, is a larger, theorised, study of this Roman context, one problematizing, not only polis religion, but also Greek – for want of a better term – ‘Romanisation’.

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- Galli, M. (ed.) 2014. *Roman Power and Greek Sanctuaries. Forms of Interaction and Communication* (Tripodes 14). Athens: Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene.
- Habicht, C. 2015. Die in Messene verwendete Ära, in A. P. Matthaiou and N. Papazadarkas (eds) *ΑΞΩΝ. Studies in Honor of Ronald S. Stroud*: 515–529. Athens: Greek Epigraphic Society.
- Petsalis-Diomidis, A. 2010. *‘Truly beyond Wonders’: Aelius Aristides and the Cult of Asklepios*. (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Roman

**Jane E. Francis and Anna Kouremenos (eds) *Roman Crete. New Perspectives*. pp. ix+262, b/w and colour illustrations. 2016. Oxford: Oxbow Books. ISBN 978–1–78570–095–8 hardback £ 50.**

This volume was instigated by a panel on *Roman Crete* presented at the *Roman Archaeology Conference* in Frankfurt, Germany in March 2012. The current book comprises a selected number of papers from the RAC panel, to which are added seven other articles. Totally, the volume is consisting of 13 articles, plus a foreword written by Hugh Sackett, and an introduction and an afterword, where the editors present an account of the previous archaeological and historical research on Roman Crete, summarize the outputs of the volume papers, and propose directions for future research.

Chronologically, the focus of the volume is the Roman imperial period (1st–3rd centuries AD). Some articles, however, extend to the late Hellenistic and late Roman periods, or even into the Early Byzantine age (8th and 9th centuries AD).

Thematically, the volume contains a variety of subjects. Broadly speaking the 13 articles discuss matters concerning economy and trade, urbanism, climate, art and architecture. As Jane Francis notes in the introduction, ‘this total represents a cross-section of the variety of Cretan material evidence, history and interpretations available to date’. Clearly, the scope of the volume was to present as much as possible new material for Roman Crete.

In the first article of the book François Chevrolier discusses the relationship between Crete and Cyrenaica, the two parts of the double province, united from the middle to second half of the 1st century BC till the beginning of the 3rd or even the early 4th century AD. Chevrolier argues that commercial exchanges between the regions are barely attested via the material evidence, but according to him, it is wrong to assume that the two regions were ignorant of each other, since ancient contacts go back to Minoan times. Coin and pottery circulation, as well as epigraphy, attests dynamic relations just after the union, i.e. during the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, which decline from the end of the 1st century onwards.

Martha Baldwin Bowsky in her article ‘A context for Knossos: Italian Sigillata stamps and cultural

<sup>3</sup> Also, e.g., Galli 2014.