Kernos

Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion
grecque antique

29 | 2016
Varia

Devotionalism, Material Culture, and the Personal in Greek Religion

K.A. Rask

Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/kernos/2386>

DOI: 10.4000/kernos.2386

ISSN: 2034-7871

Publisher

Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 October 2016

Number of pages: 9-40

ISSN: 0776-3824

Electronic reference

K.A. Rask, « Devotionalism, Material Culture, and the Personal in Greek Religion », *Kernos* [Online], 29 | 2016, Online since 01 October 2019, connection on 17 November 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/kernos/2386> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/kernos.2386>

This text was automatically generated on 17 November 2020.

Kernos

Devotionalism, Material Culture, and the Personal in Greek Religion

K.A. Rask

Introduction

- 1 In the late twentieth century, the general consensus among scholars of Greek religion held ritual to be the central, most powerful act. According to Marcel Detienne, “for nearly ten centuries, guided by immutable cultic statutes, the Greeks never failed to maintain relations with the divine powers through the highly ritualized killing of animal victims...”¹ Yet the longevity and coherence that Detienne saw in ritual can likewise be found in the individual practice of leaving objects in shrines. Some archaeologists, faced with thousands upon thousands of physical offerings (a number that dramatically increases with every excavation), characterized Greek practice as “votive religion.”²
- 2 Many studies of Greek religion have glossed over personal devotion and instead emphasized ritualization and the social forces at work underlying Greek practice. It has been difficult for some excavators to fully embrace these models because the very method of inquiry directs our attention to artifacts in shrines. These items speak to us of individuals and personal devotion, topics deserving of greater discussion and theorization. This paper addresses this need in two ways, in order to provide an alternative conceptualization of Greek religion that takes into account the personal and the material. First it presents a model for conceptualizing individual experience that turns the discussion away from sociological interpretations, which have otherwise dominated the literature. Second, it does this by focusing on materiality in devotion to the gods and the absolutely essential role of physical things.
- 3 Greek votive offerings and the personal stories behind them received detailed attention from William Rouse already in 1902.³ Over a hundred years later, we continue to struggle with fundamental problems of definition and typology.⁴ While contextualizing ‘votives’ within historical and religious circumstances bears the brunt of much

academic discussion, attempts to theorize Greek religion in a way that sufficiently accounts for embodied actors interacting with material things has received less focus.⁵ There are a number of forces that have shaped the current state of our discussion, such as the textual predisposition in studies of religion (not to mention classical studies), judgments concerning the superiority of immaterial topics over the material in religion, and, on a more practical level, limited access to archaeological evidence owing to the scattered nature of excavation reports across international and linguistic divides.⁶ On top of these methodological problems, we cannot truly reconstruct the place of objects deposited in sanctuaries until we step back and find a religious framework that successfully accounts for material culture and the many ways that individuals experience *things* as they attempt to make and react to religious worlds. In an effort to do so, I will explore material culture as ‘media’ of ‘material religion’, following the recent turn in history of religions. In so doing, I will highlight personal interactions with divinities, an experiential element of Greek religion that could use further attention.⁷

Defining Greek Religion, Personal Experience, and Votive Religion

- 4 Over the last three decades, studies of Greek religion have described it in terms of the civic, the public, and the ritualized. Most attention has been given to the notion of *polis*-religion, popularized in the work of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, who in 1990 posited that “the *polis* anchored, legitimated, and mediated all religious activity.”⁸ The close link formulated between religion and the *polis* nevertheless has a long history in scholarship, traced back to Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, dubbed the “first modern sociologist of religion.”⁹ Fustel argued that, in Greece and Rome, forms of social organization and religion were tied together in a paralleled evolutionary development.¹⁰ For historians and sociologists, state formation, with its *polis*, Bronze Age palace, or nation-state, acted as the pinnacle in an evolutionist and ‘natural’ march towards civilization.
- 5 While Fustel saw the city as the organizing social force of the advanced stages of Greek life, the more recent spotlight on the *polis* by historians of Greek religion received impetus from the success and vast output of the Copenhagen *Polis* Project (1993–2003). In response to the Copenhagen *Polis* Project, historians of religion began to address the institutional nature of Greek religion and the civic structures that it might embody.¹¹ Additionally, as Jan Bremmer notes, Sourvinou-Inwood’s understanding of *polis*-religion likewise arose out of sociologist Clifford Geertz’s definition of religion as “a system of symbols” that formulate “conceptions of a general order of existence.”¹² This semiotic reading recently underwent update by Julia Kindt.¹³
- 6 In addition to the civic and institutional component, Greek religion is frequently theorized as something inherently public. Fustel’s student, Emile Durkheim, emphasized the communal and the collective experience of worship; his work would have a lasting effect on later generations of historians of Greek religion.¹⁴ For example, Walter Burkert saw Greek religion as “public religion to an extreme degree.”¹⁵ Religious activity, expressed in communal and public terms, therefore found its location in formalized ritual. This treatment of public religious articulation was in keeping with interest in ritual as an object of academic inquiry, an interest which has grown

dramatically over the last century and has been cross-disciplinary in nature.¹⁶ Classical studies generally explores formalized action as a phenomenon of ‘public’ religion that can be observed in, for example, the essential idioms of procession, sacrifice, and prayer.¹⁷

- 7 The recurrent themes of civic, public, and ritualized activity within religious studies, of course, relates to our desire to clearly classify and define Greek ‘religion.’ A practical concern for such classifications appear likewise in what has been dubbed the ‘archaeology of ritual,’ an archaeological paradigm which considers artifacts and their stratigraphic context as ‘religious’ or ‘sacred’ primarily if they can be connected to ritual activity.¹⁸ This empiricist and scientific approach struggles to clarify the conceptual boundary between what-is-religious and what-isn’t using physical remains. Still, despite this recent attempt, the prominence given to ritual as the most significant part of Greek religion generally undermines any theoretical consideration of physical offerings for the simple reason that few textual references to any rituals associated with dedications survive. By default, because of the sparse literary evidence, the significance of giving offerings is lessened in theoretical analysis.¹⁹ At any rate, if true Greek religion lies in ritual and ritual is especially public in nature, then the role of private offerings mostly falls to the wayside.

Personal Religion and Acceptable Interactions with Gods

- 8 In both antiquity and in modern literature, personal relationships with divinities have run invariably, and sometimes unknowingly, into debates about what constitutes acceptable interactions with holy figures. As an example, the abundant material culture associated with Greek sanctuaries has been variously interpreted during these efforts to delve into personal piety. Indeed, votive practice does encourages us to emphasize the interaction between the person presenting an object and its recipient.²⁰ Over the years, however, in studies of ancient religion the act of seeking out divinities for divine help on specific issues has been evaluated with some ambivalence. Descriptions frequently characterize the act of approaching holy figures for aid with ‘materialist’ concerns, embodied in the oft-quoted Latin formulation *do ut des* and the Greek *kharis*, as ‘transactional.’²¹ Many scholars have attempted to whitewash the perceived commercial nature of the relationship between men and gods, some authors explaining away the materialistic side of Greek religious reciprocity or otherwise vaguely indicating that it is in fact *not* a bad thing. Henk Versnel used the term ‘egoism’ (self-interest) to describe “the request for health, happiness and wealth” and, although he remarked it was “not necessarily negative or damaging,” he immediately proceeded to enumerate its “truly aggressive forms,” *i.e.*, cursing.²²
- 9 Readers of ancient Greek literature will recognize the contours of this argument and the implied viewpoints about proper interaction with the gods. As Richard Seaford finds in ancient literature, “reciprocity between humans and deities comes to seem problematic because it to some extent has been reconceived in terms of the (more mechanical and impersonal) process of commercial exchange.”²³ For Plato, human overemphasis on reciprocity went beyond into the realm of *asebeia* (‘impiety’).²⁴ Furthermore, a major concern for Plato was the unmonitored and unsanctioned religious activity of individuals; he firmly supported institutional jurisdiction. Ostensibly this was because it was not possible to scrutinize para-institutional activity

for religious incorrectness and it was thus a potential danger to the surrounding population at large. Undeniably, fear of divine repercussions resulting from the impiety of others is a recurrent theme in Classical discourse. Plato proposed laws to curtail individual religious autonomy, since he deeply distrusted, and was in fact rather exasperated with, personal religious activities of the type he describes thus:

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. (*Laws* 10.909e–910a)

- 10 Besides his worries about uncontrolled private devotion and his philosophical impatience, Plato's criticism of these religious manifestations can be tied to a rhetorical dichotomy that would go on to maintain a long and spirited life in theological discourse. Peter Brown describes the rhetorical dichotomy between 'mature,' 'enlightened' forms of religion and their opposite 'vulgar' popular practices, calling it the 'two-tiered model' of religion. When researching saints and martyrs in late antiquity, Brown found in early Christian literature a later form of the Classical rhetoric and one almost exclusively present in the works of 'elite' writers who derided the 'vulgar' practices of the poor, the uneducated, and women. Brown emphasized the class and social tension evidenced by this two-tiered dichotomy.²⁵
- 11 Fundamental to this tension was a dynamic of power that, it has been argued, suffuses many modern theological and secular analyses of religion.²⁶ Robert Orsi warns, "these are issues of power — the power of our theories of 'religion' to constitute some ideas and practices as religious and others not, some practices and perspectives as essential to a particular religious and cultural world and others marginal."²⁷ We find an echo in our use of archaeological evidence. Our reconstructions of personal experience — so often contrasted with 'official' *polis*-religion — must be wary of these entrenched predispositions. The forces that have shaped and influenced our own conversation on Greek religion — what evidence is favored and what has been missed — continue to maintain a hold on our discourse.

Personal Religious Experience in Greece

- 12 Secondary literature exhibits a growing awareness of the need to deal with the personal. For example, several recent attempts aim to legitimize the experience of the individual and to investigate the realities of private or 'personal' religion.²⁸ Historically, reconstructions identified individuality and staunch devotion as a fifth-century phenomenon, tied to what Katherine Waldner calls "the rather overplayed 'discovery of the individual.'"²⁹ It behooves us to wonder, from a methodological standpoint, if this is actually an issue of source material connected to the gradual increase in preserved texts and inscriptions, rather than a concrete chronological reality.³⁰ Andrea Purvis' 2003 *Singular dedications: founders and innovators of private cults in Classical Greece* proved an important step forward in the discussion. Her study explored individuals who had, for various reasons and through various means, founded 'private' cults. Purvis also recognized that "piety and personal devotion" were evident in several other

arenas of religious “individualism”: domestic/household cult, religious associations like *orgeones* and *thiasoi*, mysteries, and activities of *idiotai* (private individuals) such as the dedication of votives.³¹ As for the establishment of shrines, Purvis made several significant observations that will become important in our later discussion: there was no particular pattern in the type of god honored, since the decision seems to have been specific to the founder’s needs while simultaneously incorporating the local religious circumstances; there was an informality in the way the founder and future worshippers were expected to engage the spirits, marked by open invitations to all passersby and a conspicuous lack of institutionalizing decrees and rules; immigrants and the socially marginalized were very prominent in private foundations and social status/wealth did not lessen an individual’s consequence within a shrine, as it might have in more publicly-recognized cults.³²

- 13 These studies are crucial to an improved understanding of ancient Greek religion, but it should be noted that there is a danger in searching for the ‘private’ as a structural opposition to ‘public’ practice, since they are inextricably related.³³ Fritz Graf warns of the ‘limits of individualization,’ given that choices made by individuals “had to resonate with the wider group at whose centre, or in whose margins, these [individuals] were...”³⁴ Our reconstructions of ancient personal engagement with the divine, especially when viewed through the lens of textual sources, repeatedly stumbles against the dialectic of authority and acceptance by the wider group. For this reason, the present study aims not to explore the individual *in opposition* to the public or *polis*, but rather to consider personal experience.
- 14 It seems, then, that in these ancient and modern accounts about private interactions with divine figures, there is a great deal at stake. The ‘genealogy’ of our discourse on Greek personal religion certainly warrants further attention and debate. For now, I hope to have shown that there are number of reasons that the time is ideal for a fresh look at personal piety and devotion in ancient Greece, with special consideration for materiality and religious experience.

Devotionalism, Material Religion, and Divine Presence

- 15 In order to explore how religion manifests in the personal lives of individuals, studies of religious traditions outside the classical world have moved away from sociological frameworks towards something more phenomenological. The ‘experience’ of individuals and personal ways of “making and unmaking worlds”³⁵ increasingly serve as topics of debate. In an effort to move beyond the constraints of ‘popular’ and ‘official’ as designations, focus on ‘lived religion’ instead has emphasized embodied practice within a material world.³⁶
- 16 These approaches encourage a different means for exploring how ancient Greek people experienced the gods on a personal and emotional level. For example, Robert Orsi views religion as something interpersonal, defining it “not as a web of meanings but of relationships between heaven and earth.”³⁷ His work questions how people managed to engage divine figures on their own terms. He highlights ‘devotionalism’, a way of religious being that stresses individual agency and the personal concerns of practitioners (the very thing that Plato criticized). Orsi describes it as “people’s direct engagement with sacred figures amid the quotidian circumstances of life,”³⁸ outside of institutional control and organized ritual. In the context of his historical and cultural

moment of study, he calls it “that array of practices, objects, liquids, images, ceremonies, and gestures by which Catholics engaged the presence of God and the saints in the spaces and times of everyday life.”³⁹

- 17 Part of that experience is the realness of divine presence;⁴⁰ for devotees the holy is “really real” and “existentially present.”⁴¹ According to Orsi, devotionalism made the divine *really there* in the everyday lives of individuals. The on-going relationship people and sacred figures formed with one another was emotionally charged and personal, aided by the ability of men and women to identify with the inhabitants of heaven based on shared appearance and life-experiences. People approached these powerful figures on issues of great emotional importance and at moments of distress, seeking direct and tangible aid. The idioms (or methods) of devotion might shift with historical circumstances, but narrative (religious storytelling) often played an important means for the creation of religious worlds.⁴² Because of the individualized nature of people’s engagement with divine presence, it was frequently outside the direct control of religious institutions and hierarchies. Also present in relationships with friends, family, and wider communities, devotionalism allowed individuals to dispute social expectations and pressures while it also reinforced them.
- 18 This, then, is the phenomenon of devotionalism, a religious mode that implies a close relationship between gods and worshipers, a relationship marked by mutual affection and obligation. The emphasis on personal interactions ostensibly links this scholarly approach to sociological interpretations and brings us back to Durkheim; indeed, as David Hall notes, the trend toward ‘lived religion’ in the United States borrowed its name from French sociologists use of the phrase ‘la religion vécue.’⁴³ While scholars studying how religion appears in daily life use a variety of other methods, such as ethnography and cultural history, Orsi’s work is also in keeping with phenomenological interests, especially its concern with embodied and emplaced individuals experiencing a material world.⁴⁴
- 19 With this ‘materialist turn’ by historians of religion has come an interest in *things*.⁴⁵ Especially inspired by the work of Colleen McDannell, a groundswell of attention probed the role of ‘devotional media’ in religion, with the term ‘material religion’ gaining in popularity.⁴⁶ Rather than emphasizing ‘high art’ or the expensive commissioned votives set up by someone such as the Athenian Xenokrateia, scholarship about material religion more often considers the “unpretentious, even trivial.”⁴⁷ Studies of devotional media enable the “close examination of the physical, sensual, corporeal, and phenomenal world.”⁴⁸
- 20 There are many reasons, then, to think that such a devotional and material angle might be useful in illuminating some aspects of Greek religion. I should note, however, that many studies of ‘material religion’ focus on Christian examples. Study of the ancient religious realm has long struggled to keep a distance between the ancient object of examination and modern Western scholars, especially in an effort to avoid applying Christian models and assumptions to an entirely different historical situation. We have not always been successful.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, careful comparative analysis has much to offer historians of ancient religions.
- 21 Given the patchy nature of our ancient sources, it is impossible to determine the extent to which this sort of religious feeling and manifestation appeared in ancient Greece. Still, some devotional elements do remain apparent in Greek traditions, so that reconsidering personal experience in this light supplies an alternative to previous

examinations of Greek practice, with several benefits. By highlighting everyday life and the very real religious needs of individuals, it problematizes the generally accepted concepts of ritual and sacred space. Instead of stressing culture as a system and the *polis* as a mostly static institution, the model of devotion is appealing because it reveals contested and marginalized figures, subversion, and the individual's struggle to seek a certain amount of religious agency while engaging holy figures. Finally, this approach emphasizes the physicality of the religious experience and especially the role of material culture.

- 22 As I will show below, the evidence from ancient Greece reveals many devotional elements in individual interactions with sacred figures, who were present in the everyday worlds of devotees. These relationships were complex and can be found beyond traditionally conceived sacred spaces and ritual times. As such, in what follows, I will first present evidence that illuminates the 'personal' as an aspect of ancient Greek devotionalism. Thereafter, I will more closely address the issue of material culture and its connection to devotion in everyday life.

Devotionalism in Classical Greece

- 23 Our sources suggest that religion happened not just in the rituals and at the shrines of sacred beings, but also in the way people imagined their relationships with the gods, in the stories that they told about those relationships, in the ever present *kharis*, and the presence of sacred beings in daily life.
- 24 Indeed, a crucial component of Greek religion can be observed in the relationships people (and communities) formed with divinities. Certainly there is language that supports the interpersonal aspect of ancient experience, given that even piety and impiety were considered relational in a number of texts: inscriptions declare one impious, for example, with respect to another, whether a god or sanctuary.⁵⁰ The choice to apply terms of piety or impiety to others reinforces ancient desires to define who was (or was not) properly religious, and in most cases appear as efforts of institutional or 'official' control.⁵¹
- 25 Abundant evidence reveals, however, that on many occasions individuals were capable of accessing sacred powers on their own, without institutional interference or mediating figures. Instead, people might set their own terms of engagement with invisible powers. A decree from the Amphiareion at Oropos indicates that private individuals were perfectly capable of sacrificing to the hero on their own, without a mediating priest or other civic institution.⁵² Menander's old woman, independently visiting local shrines and sacrificing daily, evocatively portrays personal agency and loyal devotion.⁵³ In Athens, participation in the emotionally draining Adonia seems to have been a matter of personal choice, while otherwise disenfranchised immigrants established a number of private shrines.⁵⁴ Moreover, material culture provided a rich medium that manifested and testified to relationships with divine figures, as well as to celebrate the honor and identity that such personal relationships fostered.
- 26 Indeed, votives and offerings provided ancient Greeks with a way to mark a relationship with special powers, but also served a means for expressing narratives about that experience. Archaeology and inscriptions reveal the individual's (sometimes brief and not always well-received) power and agency in 'making religious worlds,' as well as the importance and versatility of narrative in these efforts.⁵⁵ Even when not

testing institutional limits, narrative provided individuals with a place to play a leading role in the telling of their own religious story and understanding of the divine. Religious storytelling can be found in the memories of past rituals told by parents (such as Isaeus' Ciron) who trained children in proper religious comportment,⁵⁶ in the tales told by old nurses and mothers to infants,⁵⁷ in the images woven by women into tapestries and fabric, in the chronicle plaques posted after seeing Trophonius at Lebadeia, or the images offered at shrines that represented and recorded divine encounters.⁵⁸

- 27 The gods were present in these stories and at the location of storytelling itself, at the altars with attentive parents, by the beds of infants, near the weaving basket and loom. Certainly, it is well-recognized that in Greek religious thought, sacred presence and absence carried important theological and philosophical significance.⁵⁹ Secondary literature on the subject today tends to emphasize a Platonic and Kantian dualism of the mind and body, the physical and spiritual, especially when postulating distinctions in forms of presence: in cult statues, in 'manifestation,' in epiphany, and the god being *really there*. Certainly a tension can be found in Greek antiquity between religious terms for presence, concepts of purity, and accepted rules for sacred space, in contrast to the imaginations of those pulling the gods rather closer in their daily lives. Beyond the more concrete divine manifestations, however, "the reality of the unseen"⁶⁰ existed in all the places that an individual might think on and tell of the gods. That is part of religion, too, after all.
- 28 Likewise, the gods could be found within the relationships individuals built, maintained, and destroyed with others, especially family.⁶¹ Families and the *oikos* developed their own close and intimate interactions with particular deities, both with and in addition to spirits intimately located at the home. The gods were there at the house, after all: Apollo Agyieus at the door, Hestia at the hearth, Zeus in the courtyard and pantry.⁶² As for the family, parents and their children performed devotional acts or set up cult equipment together and such bonds were frequently intergenerational, linking family members across time. Vows fulfilled by children on behalf of their parents, seen, for example, in the fourth-century statue dedicated by the Parian woman Krino on Delos for her father, are often mentioned in this context.⁶³
- 29 The mutual relationship between mortals and the powerful beings with whom they interacted is frequently characterized by the concept of *kharis*. *Kharis* translates roughly as 'delight, a pleasing thing' and has the sense of 'favor' or, more precisely, 'good turn.' It lies at the heart of what scholars view as Greek religious reciprocity. The term frequently appears in the formulaic language of dedicatory inscriptions and in prayers of direct address to the gods. The idea of recompense and good turns suggests a world in which people and invisible figures entered into a relationship which included the assumption of ongoing future interactions.⁶⁴ Robert Parker is adamant: "almost the whole of Greek cultic practice is in fact founded ... on the belief or hope that reciprocity of this kind is a reality."⁶⁵
- 30 The sense of reciprocity so evident in literature and epigraphical sources, however, often went beyond the 'transactional' towards exceptionally intimate and sentimental attachments. The idea of a protective divinity personally concerned with a human worshipper was already apparent in the Homeric poems, and Mary Lefkowitz comments that Sappho "describes a relationship with Aphrodite that appears to be both intense and personal."⁶⁶ Textual references refer to *daimones* and other sorts of

helpful, and personal, spirits, while the visual arts show gods watching over their worshippers, much as Athena does with her potters.⁶⁷ Those practicing Orphic or Bacchic burials hoped for a “closeness to the divine” that included divine protection in the afterlife.⁶⁸ Equally close were those gods who came in dreams, described hovering at the shoulders of the dreamers with gentle smiles; in inscriptions, they were *parastatai*, gods who ‘stood beside’ their worshippers.⁶⁹ Not only were such interactions marked by genuine affection, but there could be a physical aspect as well, with the divine figure touching the human figure with a hand.⁷⁰ Anja Klöckner comments, “the closeness of the human-divine encounter finds its clearest expression when a god touches humans.”⁷¹

- 31 But, as with all relationships, the emotionally-charged interaction with sacred powers could become fraught with anxiety and tension.⁷² Thucydides notes that during the plague in Athens many people gave up worshipping the gods altogether, since the gods did not seem to be answering Athenian prayers; yet, simultaneously, the plague-ridden desperately sought divine help, even camping in sanctuaries.⁷³ Anger at perceived divine unfairness was real and for humans the interaction with invisible beings could be stained by disappointment and bitterness just as much as adoration. Certainly the gods were known to castigate, whether through the diseases attributed to them in the Hippocratic Corpus or the catastrophic punishments for the impiety of an individual.⁷⁴ Greeks understood that sacred beings could and did turn away from human appeals, rejecting sacrifices and offerings, leaving their shrines empty and filled with palpable absence. As Menander reports, it was not impossible to hear someone state “I sacrificed and the gods paid me no heed.”⁷⁵ In turn, humans might respond by ignoring a god’s shrine (absence).
- 32 In or out of shrines, humans and divine figures, whether gods, heroes, or *daimones*, were present to one another in a variety of places. Certainly shrines provided a ‘pure’ and ‘official’ location for these moments of encounter to occur, sometimes with the shrine itself acting as a physical record of such a moment in the past.⁷⁶ The shrines of the gods, heroes, and spirits littered urban space, with Athens itself a network of small, meaningful spots among which humans went about their lives.⁷⁷ Yet men and women kept holy figures close and present in a variety of ways, beyond the clearly defined confines of sacred space. Images of the gods travelled with humans in the form of rings, seals, and other amulets, while the gods could be called upon whenever humans needed assurance, regardless of where they might be. Prayer seems to have occurred in all manner of locales, since “it was perfectly possible to pray on one’s own wherever one happened to be.”⁷⁸ Hymns brought the gods closer; Xenophon paints an evocative picture when he describes Cyrus’ frightened soldiers singing to remind themselves of the patron spirits who gave them strength.⁷⁹
- 33 Dreams were another imagined landscape wherein gods, men, and women came together. A large number of inscriptions testify to the dedication of objects celebrating the fact that a holy figure spoke personally through dreams.⁸⁰ Not only were dreams the places where gods made promises to the devout, but it was also in dreams that divine figures banished illness. Dreams could thus become the site of answered prayers. These dream interactions were certainly some of the most private and personal that an individual could have with a holy figure, which enabled a measure of religious independence, if you will. Even in those cases when incubation occurred at an established shrine amongst doctors, priests, and other sick people, these barriers did

not come between the god and the devotee. Personal encounters between people and holy figures in the presence of the sanctuary apparatus point to a tension between intercession and individual access to gods and heroes.

- 34 While the debate about the needs and desires of the gods raged in philosophical discussions, there seems to have been a real belief that the reciprocal relationship between devotees and spirits was beneficial and desired by both. Holy figures entreated worshippers to establish shrines, reflecting the gods' desire for recognition and honor.

⁸¹ Individuals sought help from the gods in response to the personal realities of life; they asked for help or advice on specific topics connected to their own experience and family, frequently with respect to emotionally charged issues.⁸² Often requests were of a financial nature or related to economic well-being and business prospects. The intimate relationship between Aphrodite, sailors, their safety at sea, and their ultimate financial success appears in abundant evidence from the Archaic period and after.⁸³ At Dodona, one man asked, 'should I take up sheep-farming?'⁸⁴ The answers to these questions had very real consequences for the people involved; the uncertainty and fear behind the questions is at times palpable, as financial and economic well-being was often directly tied to a family's safety and survival.

- 35 People often approached the gods on behalf of family members, again reflecting the fact that the gods were there within a multiplicity of relationships. One might build a relationship with a god not for oneself, but for another. Offerings made ὑπέρ τινος ('on behalf of') are well documented, whether via animal sacrifice or, for example, dedications of clothing *on behalf of* girls experiencing their first menstrual period.⁸⁵ One might ask the gods to intervene in distressing relationships with other humans. The fourth-century philosopher Epicurus is credited with saying, "if the god were complying with the prayers of men, then all men would be perishing more quickly because they are constantly praying for many harsh things against one another."⁸⁶ Parents asked the gods to punish their wayward children.⁸⁷ Curses, part of the same idiom as prayer,⁸⁸ sought the interference of Hermes, Persephone, Hekate, and Demeter, among others. They privately entreated invisible figures to intercede on their behalf by presenting detailed and explicit descriptions of the desired outcomes. Inscribed tablets provided a way for the desperate to explicitly and verbally explain their desires and expectations in a way probably not possible with other votives.

- 36 Exploring the personal experiences of people as they went about their lives shows that they were able to interact with the gods outside of the institutions and structures of the city-state. Besides this para-institutional behavior, our sources indicate that people engaged the gods on matters of deeply personal, often private, and emotionally-charged issues. Out of these encounters, relationships with the gods might become rather intimate and certainly touched with strong sentiments. One's relationships with the gods was also closely tied to relationships with others. The question for us, then, concerns how material expressions of human feeling towards the gods appear in the archaeological record.

Devotees in a Material World: Archedamus and Pantakles

- 37 Many of the examples just presented showcase religious experiences that occur outside of the public stage or in moments that are not highly ritualized in the manner often associated with festivals, processions, and explicitly monitored situations. While

women, men, and children negotiated and developed relationships with divinities in a way that was directly relevant to their own personal affairs, they also publicly declared their devotion and great affection for sacred figures. Beyond traditional votives, one could honor the gods through other media and expressions, such as labor or storytelling, whether verbally or visually. These are more informal activities, evident in two cases that receive frequent mention in secondary literature and which illustrate devotionalism at work: the cases of Archedamus and Pantakles.

38 I argue that one could show one's devotion not just with material offerings but with the work (and results) of one's own hand. Daily maintenance of shrines is a prime example of personal piety without overtly public, communal, or formalized elements. The dedication of one's labor as a devotional act is strikingly illustrated by Archedamus, a Theraan immigrant living in Attica, who set up a shrine to the Nymphs at Vari, carving his own portrait (brandishing stoneworking tools) with other reliefs in a cave (Fig. 1). As Purvis comments, "the carving of Archedamus and the repetition of his name beside it, together with the inscriptions claiming that he was responsible for the work, give the immediate impression that he was proud of the physical labor of his accomplishment..."⁸⁹ His establishment of a garden also served as an offering. Cultivating gardens in shrines physically and materially manifested affection; the garden's maintenance, as a form of repeated devotional activity, deserves much greater study.⁹⁰

39 Another set of inscriptions referring to the caretaking of a shrine and garden in Thessaly preserves the story of Pantakles, and it dates to the fifth and fourth centuries.

⁹¹ Once again the labor of one's hands, the time spent caring for the shrine, the efforts to maintain the plant life, all attest to a privileged, intimate, and steadfast sort of devotion. The Pantakles inscriptions serve as narrative testimonials, describing a personal connection to the divinities. His story, carved into the wall of the cave, says:

Good Fortune. Welcome all visitors, each female and male, men and women, alike boys and girls, to this place sacred to Nymphs, Pan and Hermes, to Lord Apollo and Herakles and followers. This is the cave of Chiron and Asklepios and Hygieia. To them belong this whole place, and the most sacred things within it, those that grow and the tablets and dedications and the numerous gifts. The nymphs made Pantakles a distinguished man. The nymphs who tread upon this land, they made him their overseer. He helped these plants grow and shaped things with his hands; they in turn gave him a generous living for all his days. Herakles gave him strength and *arete* and power, with which he struck these stones and built them up. Apollo and his son Hermes give health and a good living through all the age. Pan gives him laughter and fun and a justified *hybris*; Chiron granted him to be wise and a poet. Now go on up with good fortune; sacrifice, all of you; say your prayers; enjoy yourself. For forgetfulness of all cares is here and your share of good things, and victory in strife.⁹²

40 This inscription testifies to the benefits and blessings that each of the honored powers provided Pantakles. Furthermore, the inscription wonderfully exhibits the idea of *kharis* and reciprocity. Pantakles' description is part tit-for-tat, listing what he gave and what the gods returned: Pantakles tended the shrine's garden, so the Nymphs blessed him with good fortune; Herakles blessed Pantakles with strength, which in turn enabled Pantakles to physically construct the shrine. Both human success and divine benevolence are inextricably linked; one cannot exist without the other.

41 Through the telling of Pantakles' story, the testimonial addresses not only his benefactors in the inscription, but also other worshippers. It calls on all types of people

to use the shrine as he had, and entreats others to equally enjoy communion with the divine. It gives agency to those passing by. The inscription is a powerful expression of devotion and the web of relationships between individuals — even strangers — and the powers they adored.⁹³

- 42 Through their physical remains, these two examples illustrate how divine figures and humans might foster relationships and how such connections and bonds were manifested materially.⁹⁴ Each example originated in a shrine, however, and therefore tells us little about religious material culture in day-to-day life beyond sacred locales. Instead, a prime example of a mundane, cheap, and anonymous item that also serves as devotional media can be found in the hands of Classical Athenian women. Fabric sashes and ribbons provide a case-study for investigating the issue of everyday devotionalism. In an effort to highlight these ‘unpretentious’ expressions of materiality and devotion, I will now turn to visual representations of fabric sashes, which not only reveal an everyday, versatile type of devotional media, but which also pinpoint more details about those with whom Greeks interacted in their religious activity.

A Case Study: Fabric Garlands, Everyday Life, and Relationships with the Invisible Dead

- 43 Observation of material culture reveals that, in fact, some of the idioms of devotionalism observed in interactions with the gods also appear in interactions with the dead. Attention to depictions of the material culture associated with these activities shows that *tainiai* and *stemmata* (ribbons and fabric garlands) were especially ubiquitous at such moments and were part of the way that people developed and maintained relationships with those who had passed on.⁹⁵ Both texts and visual representations reveal that when it came to the religious lives of Greek women, death played a major part. For a variety of reasons (e.g., pollution), women were tasked with some of the most significant activities associated with corpses and the honoring of the deceased.⁹⁶
- 44 From a practical standpoint, we can observe some repeated patterns in the manner in which Athenians interacted with invisible beings — both divinities and dead relatives.⁹⁷ After all, a character in an Aristophanes fragment tells us bluntly, “we sacrifice to them with offerings, just as we do to the gods. We also make libations and ask them to send good things our way.”⁹⁸ Archaeological evidence suggests that a number of similarities existed in the practices that occurred at fifth-century gravesides and those within shrines, including animal sacrifice, the pouring of libations, and the presentation of votive imagery. This material culture encourages us to reframe the mortal/immortal debate, since it enables us to step away from the traditional emphasis on *the nature and character* of invisible powers and instead to consider the actions and needs of human mortals. Funerary practice involved (among other things) properly engaging such now invisible figures. Alan Shapiro remarks that white-ground *lekythoi* functioned as a “form of personal communication and communion between the surviving family and the loved one into whose tomb they were placed.”⁹⁹ Indeed, he notes that “the union between the [deceased] and their survivors is increasingly stressed on *lekythoi* that may have gone into the tomb of yet another family member.”¹⁰⁰ In other words, the visual imagery of this period emphasizes relationships and interactions between the dead and the living, a theme that we have likewise observed in the arts set up in sanctuaries.

- 45 Texts allude to the devotional use of *tainiai* and *stemmata*, but especially significant in their study are funerary vessels and other Attic pottery from the fifth century.¹⁰¹ Robert Parker described these garlands as a “mundane instance of the practical diffusion of sacredness.”¹⁰² He sees them as symbols of the sacred, as ‘emblems.’ But these items are not simply semiotic markers or even, in an anthropological sense, an agent and conveyer of the sacred. There is more here than a simple switch between the sacred and the profane.
- 46 Shapiro has argued that fifth-century funerary vessels represent the ‘popular’ representation of death, in contrast to the ‘official’ representation to be found on sculptured gravestones, attesting once more to a rhetorical discourse in religion, as well as Verity Platt’s ‘visual theology’ in action.¹⁰³ Important for us, however, is the fact that *lekythoi* emphasize the ‘quiet intimacy’ of funerary activities, a lack of overt spectacle, and the presence of women.¹⁰⁴
- 47 It has been remarked that the ribbon was “the most common offering” to be left at the grave;¹⁰⁵ this must be true with respect to frequency and to cost. These fabric strips were tied around or draped upon the grave markers,¹⁰⁶ an activity depicted on *lekythoi* from the second half of the fifth century.
- 48 On a particularly stunning vase (*Fig. 2*),¹⁰⁷ two grave *stelai* are literally covered in fabric garlands. The differences in color, pattern and thickness create a visual narrative in which the tomb is visited over and over again; the scraps of cloth look back to singular devotional acts repeated on multiple occasions. The adult female ties her fabric sash, effectively *tying herself* and her act to each of the other frayed sashes on the gravestone; this creates a continuum of identical devotional moments, each one an acknowledgement of loss, obligation, and respect. Although carried out by women as they honored and appeased the dead, the build-up of *tainiai* served to create a visible monument of offerings, a multiple conglomerate of singular acts, all clear evidence for attentive community members about proper graveside tending.
- 49 Together with other media, garlands were carried to the tomb in baskets; although sometimes born by males, Athenian vase painters mostly depicted females preparing and transporting them.¹⁰⁸ It seems that one of the most significant roles that an aristocratic woman could perform in public sacrificial processions was also carried out by nearly *any woman* in the context of the cemetery. Instead of the barley, first fruits, and sacrificial knives of the *kanephoroi*, these women bear long baskets full of the trappings of mourning: vessels to be used and left as offerings, gifts with more personal significance, and garlands of various materials.
- 50 The importance of fabric sashes in conceptions of funeral behavior is bolstered if we rewind the ritual clock, as it were, to an earlier phase in the process, the *prosthesis*. In scenes of the laying out of the body, we find the devotional media familiar from cemeteries in use.¹⁰⁹ The activities at the graveside are also connected back to the domestic life of women through scenes showing the preparation of the funerary basket (*Fig. 3*).¹¹⁰
- 51 Mourning is brought into the other parts of a woman’s life through the objects and activities that we know also appeared at the tomb. Packing a basket itself becomes part of the devotional act; the bonds tying people to the invisible dead were reconstituted through devotional media even before crossing the threshold of the home.¹¹¹

- 52 While it seems likely that many Athenian women would have draped cloth sashes in the context of mourning acts, a smaller portion would be familiar with carrying them in the baskets of sacrificial processions. Part of this responsibility included garlanding the sacrificial animal. Fabric strips were likewise draped on columns, *stelae*, and altars. Athenian comedies describe shrines covered in *stemmata* and Euripides' Ion mentions the sacred garlands at Delphi.¹¹² For ancient devotees, garlands were wrapped up in their relationships with holy powers.
- 53 Much like Menander's women who 'crowned the Nymphs' and assiduously garlanded shrines, women visiting gravesides with baskets of ribbons and ceramics interacted with the dead just as they maintained the physical space. *Tainiai* and *stemmata*, then, served as devotional media in sanctuaries as well as in cemeteries. It is possible that the garlanding and beribboning of shrines might be dismissed as simply decoration, as an honorary crown of sorts, a marker of something special, an act of adornment. In fact, the ribbon is often considered an object heavy with the overtones of male victory, athletic competitions, and public honors. Rather than the sacrificial beast, the shrine, or the grave marker, it is the male body itself that is covered in fabric garlands.¹¹³ In much smaller numbers, images show women being presented with *tainiai* during wedding preparation scenes. The connections between female reception of sashes and marriage is supported by, for example, an *alabastron* depicting a man presenting a fabric strip to a woman with a *kalathos* basket, together with the notation "the bride is beautiful."¹¹⁴
- 54 Ultimately, the lengths of fabric would have been an item intimately familiar to the hands and skin of women. Most visual culture (especially *lekythoi*) support this sort of phenomenological interpretation; the strip of fabric and the human hand were conceptually linked, so that we can assume the presentation of a simple fabric sash was a meaningful act. Not only was the *giving* of the strip important, but so was the *tying* of it. The elaborate bows and knots into which they were tied seem as iconic as the single fabric sash draped in a hand.
- 55 Tying a strip of fabric in a sanctuary was presumably an activity open to everyone, regardless of social station or civic role. Moreover, the *tainia*'s frequency in domestic scenes is especially interesting, given that the women whom we see holding the draped fillet in their hands may have also have been the very people to weave them.¹¹⁵
- 56 This connection is perhaps strengthened by the inclusion of the *kalathos*, the weaving basket, in many of the scenes, as well as small looms.¹¹⁶ Bundrick notes that depictions of weaving women reflect fifth-century rhetoric stressing female contribution to the *polis* and *oikos*;¹¹⁷ we could probably make similar conclusions about weavers contributing to the religious health of the family. Yet, it is important that our focus on visual metaphor not lose sight of personal experience. When intended for holy figures, the preparation of wool and the crossing of strings on a loom might also constitute a form of personal piety, even if it was minor, mundane and banal in nature. Similarly, the weaving of the shroud to cover the deceased was a procedure that continuously reinforced the relationship between a woman and the dead.
- 57 Similar to the crude carving of Archedmus or the gardening of Pantakles, the labor at the loom becomes a devotional activity. Mourning activities are indicative; the hours spent carding the wool and weaving the sashes become combined in women's memories and bodies with the solemn moments spent sitting beside *fabric*-draped

corpses, with the careful packing of the cemetery basket, and with the task of wrapping colorful sashes around cold gravestones.

Final Conclusions

- 58 The common, ubiquitous, and even handmade *tainiai* illustrate the ability of devotional media to bring ‘religion’ into all the places and times of women’s lives, from the most momentous and emotionally distraught to the most commonplace: the cemetery, the shrine, the weaving room, and elsewhere. In contrast to special votives so often emphasized in theoretical discussions, these small, cheap objects connect us to the daily life, concerns, and experience of women. Used in the creation and maintenance of relationships, they show us that some of the devotional expressions utilized when engaging the gods and heroes were also used when engaging the dead.
- 59 Rather than acting simply as a physical expression of the immaterial or as a vessel for semiotic meanings, material culture shaped the phenomenological experience of anxious, grateful, bored, or adoring Athenians, whatever the realities of their situations. Although a great deal of theoretical debate has centered on the body politic and the city-state as the organizing force of Greek religion, the private and personal piety of individuals should not be overlooked, nor established as a binary opposition to the public. Exercising (or struggling for) their own agency and fashioning their own encounters with gods and heroes, some Athenians experienced a religious way of being that can be described as devotional. Just as material culture studies have begun to transform religious models in other disciplines, a similar examination of Greek evidence suggests that ancient peoples employed material culture when developing remarkably intimate relationships with holy figures. Present in the daily experience of individuals, these sacred beings existed beyond the sanctuary and ritual time, responding to (or ignoring) the needs of devotees who hoped to face their day-to-day struggles with the help of invisible powers.

Fig. 1. PORTRAIT OF ARCHEDAMUS WITH TOOLS, ALTARS, AND OFFERING SHELVES. CAVE OF THE NYMPHS, VARI, ATTICA. 400 BCE.

PHOTO: JACQUELYN H. CLEMENTS.

Fig. 2. Attic white-ground lekythos showing visitors at tomb of athlete, 460 BCE. By the Vouni Painter: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 35.11.5.

PHOTO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, OPEN ACCESS FOR SCHOLARLY CONTENT: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

Fig. 3. Women preparing the funerary basket before visiting the tomb. By the Timokrates Painter, 470 BCE. Athens, NM 1929.

PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ATHENS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- S.B. ALESHIRE, "Towards a Definition of 'State Cult' for Ancient Athens", in R. HÄGG (ed.), *Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence: Proceedings of the Second International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Organized by the Swedish Institute at Athens, 22-24 November 1991*, Stockholm, 1994, p. 9-16.
- C. BELL, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, New York, 1991.
- M. BLECH, *Studien zum Kranz bei den Griechen*, Berlin, 1982.
- J. BOARDMAN, D.C. KURTZ, *Greek Burial Customs*, Ithaca, 1971.
- P. BONNECHERE, "Comment aborder le système religieux des Grecs ? À Propos de deux ouvrages récents", *Kernos* 25 (2012), p. 304-317.
- H. BOWDEN, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World*, Princeton, 2010.
- J.N. BREMMER, "Manteis, Magic, Mysteries and Mythography. Messy Margins of Polis Religion?", *Kernos* 23 (2010), p. 13-35.
- , "The Reciprocity of Giving and Thanksgiving in Greek Worship", in C. GILL, N. POSTLETHWAITE and R. SEAFORD (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford, 1998, p. 127-137.

- P. BROWN, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago, 1981.
- L. BRUIT ZAIDMAN, "Religious Practices of the Individual and Family: Greece." in S.I. JOHNSTON (ed.), *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 433–434.
- S.D. BUNDRICK, "The Fabric of the City: Imaging Textile Production in Classical Athens", *Hesperia* 77 (2008), p. 283–334.
- W. BURKERT, "Greek Poleis and Civic Cults: Some Further Thoughts", in M.H. HANSEN AND K. RAUFLAAB (eds.), *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*, Stuttgart, 1995, p. 201–210.
- , *Greek Religion*, Cambridge, 1985.
- A. CHANIOTIS, *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*, Stuttgart, 2012.
- L. CLARK, "Notes on Small Textile Frames Pictured on Greek Vases", *AJA* 87 (1983), p. 91–96.
- W. CLOSTERMAN, "Women as Gift Givers and Gift Producers in Ancient Athenian Funerary Ritual," in A. AVRAMIDOU, D. DEMETRIOU, A. SHAPIRO (eds.), *Approaching the Ancient Artifact. Representation, Narrative, and Function: A Festschrift in Honor of H. Alan Shapiro*, Berlin, 2014, p. 160–174.
- W.R. CONNOR, "Seized by the Nymphs: Nympholepsy and Symbolic Expression in Classical Greece", *ClAnt* 7 (1988), p. 155–189.
- J.L. COX, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion: Key Figures, Formative Influences and Subsequent Debates*, London, 2006.
- A. DELLI PIZZI, "Impiety in Epigraphic Evidence", *Kernos* 24 (2011), p. 59–76.
- D. DEMETRIOU, "Τῆς Πάσης Ναυτιλίας Φύλαξ: Aphrodite and the Sea", *Kernos* 23 (2010), p. 67–89.
- M. DETIENNE, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice", in M. DETIENNE, J-P. VERNANT (eds.), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, Chicago, 1989, p. 1–20.
- M. DILLON, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, London, 2003.
- G. EKROTH, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods*, Liège, 2002 (*Kernos*, Suppl. 12).
- G. EKROTH, J. WALLENSTEN (eds.), *Bones, Behavior, and Belief: The Zooarchaeological Evidence as a Source for Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece and Beyond*, Stockholm, 2013.
- J. ELSNER, "Between Mimesis and Divine Power: Visuality in the Greco-Roman World", in R. NELSON (ed.), *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 45–69.
- , "Image and Ritual: Reflections on the Religious Appreciation of Classical Art", *CQ* 46 (1996), p. 515–531.
- C. FARAONE, "Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Greece", in S.I. JOHNSTON (ed.), *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 362–364.
- A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Personal Religion Among the Greeks*, Berkeley, 1954.
- N.D. FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *La Cité Antique : Étude sur le Culte, le Droit, les Institutions de la Grèce et de Rome*, Paris, 1864.
- C. GEERTZ, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, 1973.
- F. GRAF, "Individual and Common Cult: Epigraphic Reflections", in J. RÜPKE (ed.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2013, p. 115–134.

- D. HALL, "Introduction", in D. HALL (eds.), *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, Princeton, 1997, p. vii–xiii.
- Y. HAMILAKIS, *Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect*, Cambridge, 2014.
- W. HANKEY, J.M. NARBONNE, *Levinas and the Greek Heritage*, Leuven, 2006.
- T. HARRISON, *Greek Religion: Belief and Experience*, London, 2010.
- C.W. HEDRICK, "Religion and Society in Classical Greece", in D. OGDEN (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion*, Oxford, 2007, p. 281–296.
- A. HERDA, "How to Run a State Cult: The Organization of the Cult of Apollo Delphinios at Miletos", in M. HAYSOM, J. WALLNSTEN (eds.), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece: Papers Presented at a Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 17–19 April 2008*, Stockholm, 2011, p. 57–93.
- A. HERMARY, "L'offrande de la parienne Krinô à l'Artémis délienne", in E. SIMANTONI-BOURNIA, L.G. MENDONI, N. KOUROU (eds.), *Ἀμύμονα Ἔργα. Τιμητικὸς Τόμος Γιὰ Τὸν Καθηγητὴ Βασίλη Λαμπρινουδάκη*, Athens, 2007, p. 485–493.
- D. HERVIEU-LÉGER, "What Scripture Tells Me: Spontaneity and Regulation within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", in D. HALL (ed.), *Lived Religion in America*, Princeton, 1997, p. 22–40.
- P. HUSTON, *Martin Buber's Journey to Presence*, New York, 2007.
- S. INSTONE, *Greek Personal Religion: A Reader*, Oxford, 2009.
- R.C. JEBB, "Delos", *JHS* 1 (1880), p. 7–62.
- T.S.F. JIM, *Sharing with the Gods: Aparchai and Dekatai in Ancient Greece*, Oxford, 2014.
- , "The Vocabulary of Ἀπάρχεσθαι, Ἀπαρχή and Related Terms in Archaic and Classical Greece", *Kernos* 24 (2011), p. 39–58.
- K. KAROGLU, *Attic Pinakes: Votive Images in Clay*, Oxford, 2010.
- A. KAVOULAKI, "Processional Performance and the Democratic Polis", in S. GOLDHILL, R. OSBORNE (eds.), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, Cambridge, 1999, p. 293–320.
- C.M. KEESLING, *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis*, Cambridge, 2003.
- J. KINDT, "Personal Religion: A Productive Category for the Study of Ancient Greek Religion?", *JHS* 135 (2015), p. 35–50.
- , *Rethinking Greek Religion*, Cambridge, 2012.
- E.F. KING, *Material Religion and Popular Culture*, New York, 2010.
- A. KLÖCKNER, "Getting in Contact: Concepts of Human-Divine Encounter in Classical Greek Art", in J. BREMMER, A. ERSKINE (eds.), *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, Edinburgh, 2010, p. 106–125.
- L. KOSTAKI, "Πάντα Πλήρη Θεῶν εἶναι: Παρόδια Ἱερὰ Στὴν Ἀρχαία Ἀθήνα", in A. MATHAIΟΥ, I. POLINSKAYA (eds.), *Μικρὸς Ἱερομνήμων. Μελέτες εἰς Μνήμην Michael H. Jameson*, Athens, 2008, p. 145–166.
- A. KRUG, "Binden in der griechischen Kunst: Untersuchungen zur Typologie (6.–1. Jahrh. V. Chr.)", Dissertation, Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität zu Mainz, 1968.
- E. KYRIAKIDIS (ed.), *Archaeology of Ritual*, Los Angeles, 2007.

- M.R. LEFKOWITZ, "Ancient Greek Women and the Gods", in N. KALTSAS, H.A. SHAPIRO (ed.), *Worshipping Women: Ritual and Reality in Classical Athens*, New York, 2008, p. 23–27.
- P. LEMONNIER, *Mundane Objects: Materiality and Non-Verbal Communication*, Walnut Creek, 2012.
- É. LHÔTE, *Les Lamelles oraculaires de Dodone*, Genève, 2006.
- E. LUPU, "Sacrifice at the Amphiareion and a Fragmentary Sacred Law from Oropos", *Hesperia* 72 (2003), p. 321–340.
- C. MAREK, *Die Inschriften von Kaunos*, Munich, 2006.
- C. MCDANNELL, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America*, New Haven, 1998.
- A.S. MCDEVITT, *Inscriptions from Thessaly*, Hildesheim, 1970.
- J.D. MIKALSON, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*, Oxford, 2009.
- D. MORGAN, "Materiality, Social Analysis, and the Study of Religions", in D. MORGAN (ed.), *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, New York, 2010, p. 55–74.
- F. NAIDEN, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods*, Oxford, 2013.
- , "Hiketai and Theoroi at Epidauros", in J. ELSNER, I. RUTHERFORD (eds.), *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, Oxford, 2005, p. 73–95.
- J. NEILS, "Picturing Victory", in P. CHRISTENSEN, D.G. KYLE (eds.), *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, Oxford, 2013, p. 81–97.
- , "The Panathenaia and Kleisthenic Ideology", in W. D. COULSON, O. PALAGIA, T.L. SHEAR, H. A. SHAPIRO and F.J. FROST (eds.), *The Archaeology of Athens and Attica under the Democracy*, Oxford, 1994, p. 151–160.
- J. NEILS, J. OAKLEY, "Catalogue", in J. NEILS, J.H. OAKLEY (eds.), *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece: Images of Childhood from the Classical Past*, New Haven, 2003, p. 195–312.
- J.H. OAKLEY, *Picturing Death in Classical Athens*, Cambridge, 2004.
- R. ORSI, "The Problem of the Holy", in R. ORSI (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Cambridge, 2012, p. 84–105.
- , "The 'So-Called History' of the Study of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 20 (2008), p. 134–138.
- , *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*, Princeton, 2005.
- , *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950*, New Haven, 2002².
- , *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*, New Have, 1998.
- R. OSBORNE, "Hoards, Votives, Offerings: The Archaeology of the Dedicated Object", *World Archaeology* 36 (2004), p. 1–10.
- P. PAKKANEN, "Polis within the Polis. Crossing the Border of Official and Private Religion at the Sanctuary of Poseidon at Kalaureia on Poros", in M. HAYSOM, J. WALLENSTEN (eds.), *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece: Papers Presented at a Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 17–19 April 2008*, Stockholm, 2011, p. 111–134.
- R. PARKER, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, Oxford, 2005.

- , “Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion”, in C. GILL, N. POSTLETHWAITE, R. SEAFORD (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford, 1999, p. 105–126.
- , “Gods Cruel and Kind: Tragic and Civic Theology”, in C.B.R. PELLING (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, Oxford, 1997, p. 145–160.
- , *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford, 1983.
- I. PATERA, *Offrir en Grèce Ancienne. Gestes et contextes*, Stuttgart, 2012 (Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge, 41).
- V. PIRENNE-DELFORGE, F. PRESCENDI (eds.), “Nourrir les Dieux ?” *Sacrifice et représentation du divin*, Liège, 2011 (Kernos, Suppl. 26).
- V. PLATT, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion*, Cambridge, 2011.
- F. DE POLIGNAC, “Quelques réflexions sur les échanges symboliques autour de l’offrande”, in C. PRÊTRE (ed.), *Le Donateur, l’offrande et la déesse. Systèmes votifs des sanctuaires de déesses dans le monde grec*, Liège, 2009 (Kernos, Suppl. 23), p. 29–37.
- C. PRENDERGAST, “The Impact of Fustel de Coulanges ‘La Cité Antique’ on Durkheim’s Theories of Social Morphology and Social Solidarity”, *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 11 (1983), p. 53–73.
- S.M. PROMEY, “Religion, Sensation, and Materiality: An Introduction”, in S.M. PROMEY (ed.), *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice*, New Haven, 2014, p. 1–21.
- S. PROTHERO, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*, New York, 2003.
- S. PULLEYN, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, Oxford, 1997.
- A. PURVIS, *Singular Dedications: Founders and Innovators of Private Cults in Classical Greece*, New York, 2003.
- K.A. RASK, “Etruscan Animal Bones and Their Implications for Sacrificial Studies”, *HR* 53 (2014), p. 269–312.
- , “New Approaches to the Archaeology of Etruscan Cult Images”, in N.T. DE GRUMMOND, I. EDLUND-BERRY (eds.), *The Archaeology of Sanctuaries and Ritual in Etruria*, Portsmouth, 2011, p. 89–112.
- E.S. ROBERTS, “The Oracle Inscriptions Discovered at Dodona”, *JHS* 1 (1880), p. 228–241.
- W.H.D. ROUSE, *Greek Votive Offerings*, Cambridge, 1902.
- J. RÜPKE, “Individualization and Individuation as Concepts in Historical Research”, in J. RÜPKE (ed.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2013, p. 3–40.
- H.D. SAFFREY, “Le Père André-Jean Festugière”, *RSPH* 92 (2008), p. 591–600.
- G. SCHOPEN, “Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism”, *HR* 31 (1991), p. 1–23.
- S. SCULLION, “‘Pilgrimage’ and Greek Religion: Sacred and Secular in the Pagan Polis”, in J. ELSNER, I. RUTHERFORD (eds.), *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, Oxford, 2005, p. 111–130.
- R. SEAFORD, “Introduction”, in C. GILL, N. POSTLETHWAITE, R. SEAFORD (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford, 1998, p. 1–11.
- R.A. SEGAL, “Heritage Review: A Candidate for the First Modern Sociologist of Religion”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 15 (1976), p. 365–368.

- J. SERVAIS, “Stemmat’ echon en chersin”, *AC* 36 (1967), p. 415–456.
- H.A. SHAPIRO, “The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art”, *AJA* 95 (1991), p. 629–656.
- J.Z. SMITH, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*, Chicago, 1987.
- C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD, “What Is Polis Religion?”, in O. MURRAY, S. PRICE (eds.), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander*, Oxford, 1990, p. 295–322.
- D. STEINER, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought*, Princeton, 2001.
- T. STORDALEN, “Locating the Textual Gaze: Then and Now”, *Material Religion* 8 (2012), p. 521–524.
- J. TANNER, *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece: Religion, Society and Artistic Rationalization*, Cambridge, 2006.
- H. USENER, *Epicurea*. Cambridge, 2010.
- F. VAN STRATEN, “Daikrates’ Dream: A Votive Relief from Kos, and Some Other *kat’onar* Dedications”, *BABesch* 51 (1976), p. 1–38.
- M.A. VÁSQUEZ, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion*, 2011.
- H.S. VERSNEL, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*, Leiden, 2011 (*Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*, 173).
- , “Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer”, in H.S. VERSNEL (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, Leiden, 1981 (*Studies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 2), p. 1–64.
- K. WALDNER, “Dimensions of Individuality in Ancient Mystery Cults: Religious Practice and Philosophical Discourse”, in J. RÜPKE (ed.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2013, p. 215–242.

NOTES

1. .DETIENNE (1989), p. 1. For recent theoretical developments in the literature addressing sacrifice: RASK (2014); EKROTH – WALLENSTEN (2013); PIRENNE-DELFORGE – PRESCENDI (2011).
2. .KAROGLU (2010), p. 54; JIM (2014), p. 3–4, n. 3.
3. .ROUSE (1902).
4. .On ancient Greek terms used for various offerings, see: PATERA (2012), p. 17–51; JIM (2014), p. 28–58; (2011). For problems with our own application of terms, see: OSBORNE (2004).
5. .For treatment of archaeological evidence in sanctuaries, see PATERA (2012), Chapter 3. Important milestones in the theoretical discussions of material culture and images include: the object of the ‘gaze’ (ELSNER, 1996, 2000), manifestations of the immaterial (PLATT, 2011), bearers of meaning (KINDT, 2012).
6. .Gregory Shopen, for example, argues that “the concomitant disinclination to consider material remains as independent, critical sources for the history of a religion in both archaeology and historical studies also looks very much like a more recent manifestation of the sixteenth-century Protestant distrust and devaluation of actual religious and historical human behavior” (SCHOPEN [1991], p. 54). For more on what Terje Stordalen calls the ‘textual gaze,’ see STORDALEN (2012) and the responses that follow as part of *Material Religion*’s 2012 ‘In Conversation.’
7. .In this paper, I use a variety of terms to refer to the Greek gods, heroes, and spirits, such as such as holy figures, sacred figures, the divine, and invisible powers. The exploration of how

these figures are different from one another in human imaginations and how they were treated differently in human practice is beyond the scope of this paper and has been treated elsewhere. See, for example, EKROTH (2002).

8. .SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1990), p. 297.

9. .SEGAL (1976), p. 365.

10. .Fustel claimed that, in the earliest stages, the family/*gens* was held together by domestic religion and ancestor worship. As the city developed beyond the kinship group, civic gods and their worship gave way to the institutions, laws, and morals of the city. In fact, for Fustel, all the institutions and morals of the city derived from religion: FUSTEL DE COULANGES (1864).

11. .BURKERT (1995).

12. .BREMNER (2010), p. 31; GEERTZ (1973), p. 90.

13. .Kindt suggests that the *ethne* may be another organizing force worthy of consideration: KINDT (2012), p. 33–34. On the oligarchy's role in determining citizenship via the worship of Apollo Delphinus, see Alexander Herda's study of Miletus: HERDA (2011). From a practical standpoint, identifying the structures of *polis*-religion has proven difficult; Aleshire, in an attempt to deal with the vague label 'state-cult,' finally concluded that in Athens a state-cult "regulates the form and the finances of cult — the externals, if you will — but not the content, which is governed in large part by tradition and interpreted by the priests, *exegetai*, and *manteis*": ALESHIRE (1994), p. 14. For Kindt, religion is located, or 'embedded,' within the larger unit of 'culture.' It is a 'language' or system of signs employed by ancient Greeks to 'make sense.' This semiotic approach looks for 'meaning' within the larger system and cultural-historical contexts of Greek city-states.

14. .PRENDERGAST (1983).

15. .BURKERT (1985), p. 276.

16. .For example: SMITH (1987); BELL (1991); BREMNER (1998).

17. .KAVOULAKI (1999); PULLEYN (1997). On sacrifice, see n.1.

18. .KYRIAKIDIS (2007). The academic conceptual boundary between what-is-religious and what-isn't can be exemplified in Scott Scullion's description of cult activities: "The topography of the Greek sanctuary is thus a very concrete manifestation of the distinction between sacred ritual events on the one hand and non-sacred or at most very vaguely sacred cultural and athletic events on the other": SCULLION (2005), p. 115. Perhaps connected to this setting of boundaries is an interest exploring the visual experience of certain images as 'ritual' viewing: ELSNER (2000); TANNER (2006), p. 45–48, 90–92.

19. .Bremner notes, "the focus on and inspiration by Durkheimian thought perhaps lead to a certain overvaluation of public cultic practice above private activities and of religious performance above religious thinking and speculation": BREMNER (2010), p. 32.

20. .Joanna Patera stresses that "[il s'agit d']établir de bonnes relations avec les dieux": PATERA (2012), p. 96. Votives have been treated as forms of communication, while François de Polignac recently noted that votives helped create a relationship (and structural network) between dedicants, the divine, and other people: POLIGNAC (2009).

21. .BOWDEN (2010), p. 11. In Jeremy Tanner's reconstruction, votives establish an "exchange relationship" and record a "transaction": TANNER (2006), p. 86–87.

22. .VERSNEL (1981), p. 18.

23. .SEAFORD (1998), p. 10.

24. .On *asebeia* towards gods, sanctuaries, and so on, see DELLI PIZZI (2011).

25. .BROWN (1981).

26. .*Ibid.*, p. 17–22.

27. .ORSI (2002), p. xxxii–xxxiii. Further discussion of the dynamics involved in defining religious activity: (2012), p. 96–99.

28. .While individualism has only recently attracted more concentrated scholarly attention, it is not necessarily a new topic. For example, an older work of note was FESTUGIÈRE (1954). More recently, RÜPKE (2013); VERSNEL (2011), p. 119–137; HARRISON (2010); INSTONE (2009). From an archaeological standpoint: JIM (2014); PAKKANEN (2011), p. 130–175. Robert Parker has been diligent about focusing on this “largely unobservable but very important face of ancient religion”: PARKER (2005), p. 44. Purvis postulates that if the activities were “not demanded by cult regulations of the polis or local political organization such as the Attic deme” then they were ‘personal’: PURVIS (2003), p. 7. We can find examples of such a division in the religious experience of two different sorts of pilgrims, the *theoros* and the *hikete*. The *theoros*, functioning as a delegate from a home city, visited important shrines to observe festivals as a representative of a political entity. It is argued that the *hikete* (supplicant), in contrast, was an individual who visited powerful sites in order to get some sort of aid or help; he was “the protagonist, acting on his own behalf”: NAIDEN (2005), p. 74.

29. .WALDNER (2013), p. 227.

30. .For some time the rise of mystery religions served a prominent foundation in such reconstructions. In 2011, Versnel traced the chronological development of henotheism (“the privileged devotion to one god” [p. 244]) especially to Athens in the late fifth century, where he sees a ‘prelude’ to the Hellenistic and Imperial form. He argues that during the classical period and earlier, henotheism was not yet a ‘structural complex,’ and instead “a permanent exclusive devotion to one god was confined to small cult groups and religious devotees in the margins of society”: VERSNEL (2011), p. 303–304. Rüpke’s 2011 edited volume on the individual in religious life limited itself to the fourth century and after. Many arguments concerning the rise of personal devotion are mostly based on literature and epigraphy, but there has been little attempt to study the issue from an archaeological perspective. An analysis of change over time in devotional material culture during this period is truly a methodological experiment and challenge deserving of attention. For a historiographical approach to the question, see KINDT (2015).

31. .PURVIS (2003), p. 5–7.

32. .*Ibid.*, p. 121–116.

33. .KINDT (2015), p. 47: “it is important that we do not postulate a simple binary division between *polis* and personal religion.”

34. .GRAF (2013), p. 132.

35. .ORSI (2002), p. xix.

36. .For a methodological discussion of lived religion in contrast to ‘popular’ religion and ‘official’ religion, see *ibid.*, p. xiii–xxiv. Orsi notes a renewed interest in religious ‘experience’ “after years of its displacement in religious studies ... by language, social structure, and power”: ORSI (2012), p. 86, 104. Stephen Prothero finds an emphasis on experience — by practitioners themselves — as something to be contrasted with cognitive and dogmatic forms of practice. In nineteenth-century American Protestantism, for example, he sees a transformation towards “authentic experience rather than correct doctrine”: PROTHERO (2003), p. 148. For ‘experience’ in ancient religion, see RÜPKE (2013), p. 20–21.

37. .ORSI (2005), p. 5.

38. .ORSI (2002), p. xiv.

39. .ORSI (2005), p. 55. Orsi’s investigates devotional culture among immigrant communities in twentieth-century America and examines the way religious thinking suffuses and molds the lives of devotees. For the comparison of ancient practices and modern Christianity, see VERSNEL (2011), p. 539–559.

40. .Already in 1921 Martin Buber argued that God’s presence (as opposed to absence) was the major component of religion. Brown tied the concept to material objects via ‘*prænestia*.’ On presence, HUSTON (2007); ORSI (2005), p. 10–13; BROWN (1981), p. 87–88.

41. .ORSI (2012), p. 102–103.
42. .On narrative (telling stories and sharing personal experiences) as a form of women's devotional activity, ORSI (1998), p. 121–129.
43. .HALL (1997). For a discussion of French sociology's interest in 'popular' and 'lived religion', together with its tie to the Durkheimian tradition, see HERVIEU-LÉGER (1997).
44. .Moreover, already in the nineteenth century, the theologian Wilhelm Herrman drew on the work of phenomenologist Albrecht Ritschl to formulate a relational model, "defining religion as relational, that is, founded on a personal experience between humans and supersensible realities": COX (2006), p. 52. For a phenomenological, or sensory, approach to material culture in the ancient world, see HAMILAKIS (2014).
45. .For the 'materialist phenomenology of religion,' see VÁSQUEZ (2011).
46. .The new journal of the same name, *Material Religion*, seeks to "explore how religion happens in material culture" and how material culture "constructs the worlds of belief." The physicality and materiality of the world in which people live has been conceptualized in the new discourse in a variety of ways. Morgan, for example, suggests that "religious material culture consists of the objects, spaces, practices, and ideas in which belief takes shape." MORGAN (2010), p. 73. For Orsi, it is more phenomenological. He says, "devotional media constituted the sense world of pre-Councilar Catholicism, its smells, textures, tastes and sounds, and formed the very way Catholic bodies existed and moved, the poise of bearing of these bodies ... The Virgin Mary and the saints were present in various representations of them, in the body saying the rosary, in the sound of the memorized Hail Mary and the sound of its thrumming in the body. There was power in rosaries, in oils, and in prayer cards...": ORSI (2005), p. 55. See especially, PROMEY (2014).
47. .KING (2010), p. xi. Lemonnier spotlights these objects with his recent *Mundane Objects*: LEMONNIER (2012).
48. .MCDANNELL (1998), p. 2.
49. .(Father) Festugière's investigations of Greek mysticism were closely intertwined with his own Christian "religious quest": HANKEY – NARBONNE (2006), p. 163–188; SAFFREY (2008); Jan Bremmer suggests that the concept of *polis*-religion stems from a persistent interest in finding a Greek alternative to the organizing system found in Orthodox Christian contexts: BREMMER (2010), p. 24; to students of Greek religion, Charles Hedrick flatly states "the issue of the relationship of society and religion is a modern problem, one legacy of Christianity to modern scholarship": HEDRICK (2007). Indeed, Tomoko Masuzawa claims that religious studies is not yet divorced from Christian theology. See Orsi's rebuttal: ORSI (2008).
50. .DELLI PIZZI (2011). In addition to inscriptions and decrees, Ps.-Aristotle explains that "impiety is a fault regarding gods, daemons or deceased persons, parents or homeland (*Vir.*, 1251a)."
51. .The question of religious authority in Greece is a topic with enormous potential, with interrogations into power, dialectical tensions, religious subversion, and *ta patria* topics that may prove very enlightening. Bremmer (2010), wondering who possesses authority, ultimately decides it is the *polis*, but a *polis* with "messy margins." As Pierre Bonnechere argued, "les Grecs peuvent aisément s'évader à l'intérieur du cadre de la religion organisée par la cité, car le polythéisme est d'emblée synonyme de diversité et les cultes privés, on l'a dit, se développent dans le cadre des patria, délimité par les autorités et en accord avec elles": BONNECHERE (2012), p. 315. Katharina Waldner ties religious authority in the fifth century to shifting social and political realities, so that the "Athenian *demos* insisted on its right to control people who made use of religious practice to reach a marked degree of individuality": WALDNER (2013), p. 227.
52. .SEG 47, 488; LUPU (2003).
53. .Menander, *Dyskolos*, 260ff.
54. .Matthew Dillon stresses the element of *choice* in the *Adonia*: DILLON (2003), p. 162–169. On immigrant shrines: PURVIS (2003), p. 35–36.

55. It has been argued, in fact, that emphasis on ‘religious storytelling’ in contrast to ‘theology’ is a particular feature of traditions featuring such individual autonomy and personal agency. Prothero observes that, for nineteenth-century evangelists in the United States, theology was viewed in a negative light, as when there was a turn from “theology to experience and from experience to storytelling.” He recounts that the move away from dogma and textual exegesis in sermons “yielded to narrative in the pulpit” and the “story sermon” and produced “a new form of Protestantism”: PROTHERO (2003), p. 64; 51–52.

56. Isaeus, *Ciron*, 8.15.

57. Plato, *Laws*, 887d: “the stories heard so often in earliest infancy, while still at the breast, from their mothers and nurses — stories, you may say, crooned over them, in sport and in earnest, like spells — and heard again in prayers offered over sacrifices...”

58. Verity Platt refers to votive reliefs as ‘visual theology,’ arguing that visual representations participated in a sophisticated discourse on representation and divine manifestation. She argues that votives “testify to the metaphysical reality of the sacred and the potential for its visible manifestation to mortal eyes, but they also exhibit an awareness of the difficulties of interpreting, recording, and responding to such contact with the divine”: PLATT (2011), p. 49.

59. For example, Platt reminds us that in the later third-century BCE *Hymn to Demetrius Poliorcetes*, “the greatest and most beloved gods are present (παρῆσιν) in the city” (*ibid.*, 1–2). For attacks by Greek intellectuals on those who believed gods filled their cult statues, see STEINER (2001), p. 121–125.

60. ORSI (2012), p. 102.

61. Orsi suggests that “family dynamics are one spring of sacred presences,” with sacred powers “draw[ing] on the intimate histories of relationships within family worlds”: ORSI (2005), p. 13.

62. BRUIT ZAIDMAN (2004).

63. SEG 57, 758. HERMARY (2007). A number of examples are known from the Acropolis in Athens, where children dedicated offerings in place of their parents: KEESLING (2003), p. 91–92.

64. JIM (2014), p. 60–68; MIKALSON (2009), p. 178–180; PARKER (1999); BREMMER (1998).

65. PARKER (1999), p. 105. References to a perceived association of exchange can be identified in many ancient texts mentioning sacrifice, the offering of objects, hymns, prayers, and paeans: BREMMER (1998).

66. LEFKOWITZ (2008), p. 24. In the sixth century, the tyrant Peisistratus dressed a particularly tall woman in the outfit of Athena and rode with her in a chariot to the city acropolis, a bit of dramatic pageantry intended to show Athena’s personal approval and affection for him. Even if Herodotus scoffed at the event (*Histories*, 1.60), it testifies to the general understanding that a god might stand in support of a human devotee.

67. On *daimones*, see for example: Plato, *Phaedo*, 107 d 5–e 4; Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 122–126. MIKALSON (2009), p. 24.

68. WALDNER (2013), p. 226.

69. VAN STRATEN (1976), p. 5 and 13.

70. On a votive relief representing a healing miracle from the end of the fifth century, Asklepios lays both hands on the shoulder of his dreaming female suppliant (Piraeus 405): DILLON (2003), p. 306, n. 113. For a similar emphasis on touch in human and divine encounters, see the Etruscan examples in RASK (2011), p. 115.

71. KLÖCKNER (2010), p. 112.

72. For a series of articles concerning religious emotion, see CHANIOTIS (2012).

73. Thucydides, 2.53.

74. Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease*, 3.15–25. For divine causes of ill health, see PARKER (1983), p. 235–256. He also notes (1997, p. 143–144) that, in general, Athenian oratory consistently articulated the view that the gods were always positively inclined towards the city, but that any

harm befalling Athens was not caused by divine retribution but rather by the incompetence and faults of Athenian politicians.

75. .According to Plutarch, *Non pos. suav.*, 1102 c–d. For collected evidence concerning the rejection of sacrifice, see especially Chapter 4: NAIDEN (2013), p. 142.

76. .Divine manifestation was a frequent reason for the establishment of new shrines. Physical epiphanies have been much studied and in antiquity explained the foundation of the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Attic worship of Pan, the latter after the god personally appeared to Pheidippides on the slopes of a mountain.

77. .KOSTAKI (2008).

78. .PULLEYN (1997), p. 165.

79. .Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 3.3.58.

80. .Platt describes the “phenomenological impact of dream vision” as “a sense of epiphanic encounter with the divine” (p. 277). For the topic of dreams and divine presence in later Second Sophistic literature, see PLATT (2011), Chapter 6; VAN STRATEN (1976).

81. .Our evidence suggests that gods truly desired human worship, with many shrines established at the express instigation of holy figures intimating this. For example, a Phileratus established an altar and shrine on fourth-century Kos for Basileus, at his command; so too did Chrysina of Cnidus, after Hermes told her to worship Demeter and Kore in a dream: PURVIS (2003), p. 58 and 59.

82. .At times these were unspecific requests, seeking ‘all good things’: Xenophon says that Socrates “used to pray to the gods simply to give the good things ‘since the gods know best what kinds of things are good.’ ” Xenophon *Memorabilia*, 1.3.2; MIKALSON (2009), p. 47.

83. .DEMETRIOU (2010).

84. .LHÔTE (2006), no. 80.

85. .Sacrifice on behalf of others: NAIDEN (2013), p. 185–201. On dedications on behalf of girls: DILLON (2003), p. 21. Inscriptions from oracle sites such as Dodona indicate that direct communication with the gods was sought on matters involving other family members. At Dodona, Diognetos the Athenian asked Zeus Naios and Dione for a ‘certain favor’ on behalf of himself, his ‘well-wishers,’ and his mother Clearete, while one Amyntas asked about the prosperity of his son: LHÔTE (2006), nos. 23 and 69.

86. .Epicurus, fr. 388 (ed. H. USENER); MIKALSON (2009), p. 44.

87. .Plato, *Laws*, 931 b–c: “A parent can curse a child more effectively than anyone can do it to anybody else, quite rightly”; PARKER (1983), p. 196–198.

88. .FARAONE (2004), p. 264.

89. .PURVIS (2003), p. 264. See also CONNOR (1988), p. 166–174.

90. .For references, see VERSNEL (2011), p. 120–121 and n. 353 for gardens; MCDEVITT (1970), nos. 166 and 171; PURVIS (2003), p. 17–18; CONNOR (1988), p. 162–163, n. 129 for bibliography. The Carian city of Kanoun provides an interesting Hellenistic example that mixes the personal attendance of shrine gardens with public roles and proclamations. A *synodos* decree assigned positions to maintain a shrine’s altar and hut, but allowed volunteers to maintain the trees. The honors that came with this activity were public and socially significant, but there was no official role for maintaining the plant life, rather volunteered labor: MAREK (2006), #33.

91. .WAGMAN (2015); PURVIS (2003), p. 17–18; MCDEVITT (1970), nos. 166 and 171.

92. .Translation from CONNOR (1988), p. 163.

93. .For a detailed discussion of the inscription, including its date after the founding of the shrine and its efforts to ‘construct’ the relationship between the shrine’s founder and the gods, see WAGMAN (2015), p. 66–93. Other preserved dedications functioned as invitation encouraging other human devotees to join in the worship of a particular god; in the fourth century an Athenian

woman named Philoumene set up an anatomical votive of a vulva in honor of Aphrodite, with the inscription “Passersby, praise (the goddess).” Athens, National Museum 1821 (IG II² 4575).

94. Dedications to deities have been described in terms that stress the encounter and development of relationships with holy figures (although not in the form that I am presenting here). Cf. *supra*, n. 20.

95. I believe that this discussion equally has bearing on wreaths of leaves and branches. The dedication of wreaths must have been one of the most common of votive actions at Greek shrines and festival occasions. During the Anthesteria, for example, Athenians donated the wreaths they wore during the festival together with their drinking cups. It is possible that we should imagine certain sanctuaries littered with stacks of wreaths in various states of decay. Although certainly to be associated with personal activities, it appears that laurel wreaths could also be paid for by sanctuaries: EBGR 2008, #8 and #21. For discussions of crowns, wreaths, and garlands, see: SERVAIS (1967); KRUG, (1968); BLECH (1982).

96. For miasma and the dead, see PARKER (1983), p. 32–48.

97. As they did with the gods, people conceived of their relationship with their dead as one characterized by *kharis*, that is, a mostly positive reciprocal relationship involving a back-and-forth of good turns. While the Athenians already had a very strong social obligation to the dead, they also looked to them for help in times of need, praying in the language of *kharis*. Aeschylus depicts Electra wondering what to say at her father’s grave; she contemplates using the oft-utilized phrase “give back something good (*esthl’ antididnonai*) to those offering these honors (*stephe*).” (Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, 93–94.) This relationship was maintained in a number of ways similar to that fostered with divine figures.

98. Aristophanes, *Tagenistae*, fr. 504 (PCG).12ff: καὶ θύομεν αὐτοῖσι τοῖς ἐναγίσμασιν ὥσπερ θεοῖσι, καὶ χοὰς γε χεόμενοι αἰτούμεθ’ αὐτοὺς δευρ’ ἀνεῖναι τὰγαθὰ.

99. SHAPIRO (1991), p. 653.

100. *Ibid.*, 29–37.

101. As with any source from antiquity, care must be used when making assumptions about real practice, in contrast to imagined (or imaged) practice (*ibid.*, 655). A variety of historical forces no doubt contributed to the depiction of these objects and activities by vase-painters during the fifth century. For example, emphasis on fabric ribbons and sashes may connect to the changing cultural significance of weaving rather than attempts by artists to truthfully record funerary practice. Indeed, Sheramy Bundrick argues that fifth-century genre scenes of weaving convey the important role of ‘citizen’ wives as weavers in the household, adding to the success of the *oikos* and bringing *harmonia* to a home: BUNDRICK (2008). As such, the idealized *oikos* prospered under the democratic system, interweaving a polis and *oikos* that Bundrick calls “inextricably bound (p. 329).” I suggest that Bundrick’s argument can be taken a step further. She mostly addresses images of the domestic sphere and weaving scenes in general, but her argument could certainly be extended to the depiction of *tainiai* in the funerary sphere. In these cases, women act as mourners, participating in one of their major religious roles, one that is both private and nevertheless visible to the wider public. It could be argued that vase-painters illustrated ‘proper’ activities for democratic families around the tomb, conspicuously leaving out elaborate funerary displays and the trappings of *habrosyne*. Bundrick’s final suggestion that the peaceful idealized *oikos* served as an inversion of an otherwise distressing reality, with fifth-century Athens continuously embroiled in warfare, may be relevant to these scenes of graveside mourning. The women presenting *tainiai* to the deceased, perhaps, provide a tiny glimpse of a very grief-stricken reality.

102. Parker is correct to state “the garland marked with a certain sanctity many areas of Greek life outside the strictly religious sphere”: PARKER (1983), p. 153 and 176.

103. SHAPIRO (1991), p. 653: “This is the public face of death, while the white *lekkythoi* present a set of popular beliefs less shaped by official ideology.”

104. *Ibid.*, 649. Funerary practices on Greek vases have been extensively analyzed in previous literature, and a full discussion of *tainiai* in these sources is beyond the scope of this paper. Oakley, for example, argues that *tainiai* relate to the heroization of the dead: OAKLEY (2004), p. 204–205.
105. NEILS – OAKLEY (2003), p. 299.
106. We find painted versions on fourth-century grave stele from elsewhere in Greece. For example, the *stelai* in the Volos Archaeological Museum are painted with *tainiai*: BOARDMAN – KURTZ (1971), p. 235 and 236.
107. By the Vouini Painter. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 35.11.5.
108. OAKLEY (2004), p. 203, fig. 213. For funerary basket-bearers, see *ibid.*, figs. 25, 31, 85, 86, 133, 151, pl. 131, pl. 136.
109. *Ibid.*, 48. Parker sees the use of fabric sashes in this context as an activity that symbolically endows the corpse with an ‘emblem of purity’: PARKER (1983), p. 35.
110. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 2828; OAKLEY (2004), p. fig. 13. Shapiro describes the preparation of the funerary basket and the tending of the tomb as the two most common episodes depicted on funerary *lekythoi*: SHAPIRO (1991), p. 651.
111. Wendy Closterman recently identified these sorts of women’s funerary activities as ‘gift-giving’ that occurred outside the moment of ‘crisis’ associated with a woman’s role in the funeral itself: CLOSTERMAN (2014).
112. Euripides, *Ion*, 223–225. For depictions of garlands draped on (non-funerary) monuments and altars, see: Attic red-figure *pelike* with winged male draping garland, CVA, Munich 2, pl. 77.4 (Beazley #12527); garlands draped on altars, CVA Geneva, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire 1, 22–23 (Beazley #14817); Salonica, Archaeological Museum 7758 (Beazley #15217); Athens, National Museum: 15093 (Beazley #15973).
113. For example: Attic red-figure *hydria* of the Pezzino Group, Munich, Antikensammlungen 2420. For further examples, see NEILS (2013), p. 90–92. Jenifer Niels also suggests that some of these scenes on Attic vases may refer to the *euandria* contest: NEILS (1994), p. 155–159.
114. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles 508. BUNDRICK (2008), p. 306.
115. For the production of funerary textiles, see CLOSTERMAN (2014), p. 173.
116. Bundrick addresses a number of vases depicting women with hand looms: *ibid.* Clark suggests that the small hand looms were used for sprang weaving, which would produce a flexible, lace-like fabric used to create women’s hair nets: CLARK (1983).
117. BUNDRICK (2008). In fact, Closterman argues that the presentation of food and textiles “was an extension of the care they gave the living in their household”: CLOSTERMAN (2014), p. 162.

ABSTRACTS

Despite emphasis on public, ritual-centered aspects of ancient practice, Greek images and objects attest to private and personal encounters with divinities. This paper uses archaeological evidence to explore personal, lived features of ancient Athenian religious life. Although sometimes described as ‘transactional’, the development of personal relationships with the gods, together with the manipulation of material things, appears to be one of the most prominent elements in Greek religious experience. This paper examines religious materiality and devotional behavior as it existed outside of organizing systems, ritual, and sacred space. Greek evidence suggests that

material culture was 'religion' in physical form, part of devotees' methods for developing remarkably intimate relationships with holy figures in a process termed 'devotionalism.' Athenian women used a commonplace item from daily life as a form of religious media: the *tainia* (ribbon). Women employed them in all the places of their lives, including homes, festival sites, and shrines. Pottery also suggests that Athenians employed such devotional media to interact with the deceased in cemeteries.

Malgré l'accent porté sur les aspects publics, ritualistes de la pratique ancienne, les images et les objets grecs attestent des rencontres privées et personnelles avec des dieux. Cet article recourt à la documentation archéologique pour explorer les traits personnels, vécus, de la vie religieuse de l'Athènes attique. Bien qu'elles soient parfois décrites comme des « transactions », le développement des relations personnelles avec les dieux et de la manipulation de choses matérielles semble être l'un des éléments les plus saillants de l'expérience religieuse des Grecs. Cette étude examine la matérialité religieuse et l'attitude dévotionnelle telle qu'elle existait en dehors de systèmes rituels organisés et des espaces sacrés. La documentation grecque suggère que la culture matérielle était « de la religion » sous forme physique et une part des méthodes des dévots pour développer des relations remarquablement intimes avec des figures sacrées dans un processus appelé « dévotionalisme ». Les femmes athéniennes utilisaient un objet commun de la vie quotidienne comme une forme de médium religieux: la *tainia* (ruban). Les femmes l'employaient dans tous les lieux de leur vie, y compris les maisons, les lieux de fêtes et les sanctuaires. La céramique suggère que les Athéniens ont employé de tels média dévotionnels pour interagir avec les défunts dans les cimetières.

AUTHOR

K.A. RASK

Duquesne University
raskk@duq.edu