

Greece, Rome and Greco-Roman Period

CAVE AND WORSHIP IN ANCIENT GREECE: NEW APPROACHES TO LANDSCAPE AND RITUAL. Edited by Stella Katsarou and Alexander Nagel. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. xviii + 251. \$160.00.

Deriving from a colloquium held at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of American (Boston, 2018), the papers collected in this illustrated volume combine case studies of Greek caves and related natural structures (e.g., rock shelters) with the archaeological evidence for religious worship and cult activity. The approaches are many (e.g., anthropology, zooarchaeology, geology), and the geographical coverage includes mainland Greece, Cyclades, Crete, Ionian Islands, and southern Italy. From deep prehistory to the end of classical antiquity, the authors are unswerving in their aim to advance sacred cave studies beyond the mythological and literary priorities of the past. They consider instead the indications of communal human activity at cave sites—as well as any potential social, political, economic, or cognitive implications of it—through the lens of the rural religious landscape, its contexts, and its networks. These essays build on past scholarship and archaeological knowledge, introduce new or little-known material, and demonstrate innovative ways of approaching cave sanctuaries, sacred caves, and sacred landscapes in Greece and its dependencies. The volume serves as a sturdy base for future cave explorations across the Mediterranean that will encourage fresh avenues of interpretation, but readers should be prepared for varying terms across chapters (“sacred caves,” “ritual caves,” etc.) that may or may not indicate the same ancient reality. While the study of Greek caves is not new, this book proposes the ongoing need for systematic cave studies, proves the continuing influence of survey and landscape archaeology, and reminds us that caves, their finds, and their diachronic human use, are a fundamental part of both the archaeological and religious heritage.

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MATER FLORUM. FLORA E IL SUO CULTO A ROMA. By Lorenzo Fabbri. Biblioteca dell’Archivum Romanicum’ 492. Florence. Leo S. Olschki Editore. 2019. Pp. xiv + 278 + 8 plates. 30,00 euros.

This is the first book-length study of the goddess Flora, both in religion and in the broader Roman culture. The touchstone text is Ovid’s presentation of Flora and her festival in *Fasti*, supplemented by an array of literary and epigraphical sources. Fabbri typically proceeds by analyzing an issue at hand through summary and critique of previous interpretations. There are three parts: 1) The goddess herself; 2) Flora’s cult; 3) her iconography. Part I rightly insists on Flora’s core agricultural identity, the deity who oversees the vulnerable stage of blooming during the growth of grains and fruit trees. She is, first of all, a goddess of the fields (Martial: *rustica*). Later a ‘second Flora’ emerges in association with the ornamental flowers of the garden, becoming dominant in the Roman imagination and extending even to the ‘bloom’ of youth. In later antiquity

and Byzantine times, Flora is enigmatically implicated with the name Anthousa as a sacred term for Rome/Constantinople. Part II follows Ovid point by point in discussing her festival Floralia and its games—especially the notorious racy theatrical entertainments featuring prostitutes, which (after Wiseman) likely featured Roman myth and history. Fabbri carefully analyzes the Oscan Agnone Tablet to demonstrate Flora’s worship in central Italy outside of Rome, again in connection with Ceres. Part III is really an appendix that treats the tiny number of visual representations surviving antiquity and then rapidly reviews a select group of modern Floras. Future study of the Roman goddess Flora will begin with this useful book.

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LES DIEUX D’HOMÈRE II: ANTHROPOMORPHISMES. Edited by R. Gagné and M. Herrero de Jauregui. Kernos Suppl. 33. Presse Universitaire de Liège: Liège, 2019. Pp. 329. Illustrations.

This volume complements an earlier one that focused on the polytheism of the Homeric gods (*Kernos* Suppl.31) and brings together ten contributions along with an introduction by the editors that focuses on the anthropomorphism of the Homeric gods and attempts to refine and complicate what that term means. G. Pironti points out that the gods depicted in Homer cannot be pinned down to their human shape but obey quite different laws. Similarly, personified abstractions like Prayers or aniconic images of the gods do not fit our notions of the Olympian pantheon (Bonano, Pisano). Two contributions focus on material depictions of the gods; in vase painting, they are often present, but ignored by the human actors (H. Collard); Pheidias drew his inspiration for the cult statue of Zeus for Olympia, not from the well-known striding god with the thunderbolt, but from the description of the Olympian’s majestic nod from the first book of the *Iliad* (Grand-Clément). Inversely, Dio Chrysostomos’ Zeus takes its inspiration from Pheidias’ statue while Artemidorus’ conceives of the gods as they appear in dreams on the basis of their sculptural representations (V. Pirenne-Delforge). Lucian satirizes the all-too-human character of Zeus, but also parodies the moralizing of the philosophers (C. Bonnet). Focusing on *Odyssey* 18.485–7 (“The gods, in the guise of strangers, frequent the cities of men, observing both their hybris and good rule.”), R. Gagné traces the passage’s reception from Plato to late antiquity. M. Herrero de Jauregui continues in this vein by tracing the complex early Christian reception of Xenophanes’ criticism of Homer’s anthropomorphic gods. Finally, M. Bettini looks at the *dei minuti* of the Romans, who, he argues, while not having an anthropomorphic form, nevertheless possess human agency. While many contributions focus on the reception of the Homeric gods, rather than their within the epics; nevertheless, Gagné insists that the study of their reception can enhance our direct confrontation with their divine anthropomorphism.

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