

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF DIVINE SPACE. REFLECTIONS ON HUMAN ACTIONS CARRIED OUT IN GREEK SANCTUARIES

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Summary

The article deals with the anthropological dimension of the Greek sanctuary, by focusing on human actions taking place inside the *temenos*. The latter was aimed at ensuring the relationship between mortals and gods; nevertheless, its relevance extended far beyond the merely religious sphere. Besides providing the ground for the implementation of the ritual actions, sacred areas fostered the establishment of the collective identity, the diffusion of political messages, the administration of public economy, the creation of a common behavioural system and the knowledge of laws. Therefore, the proper comprehension of the different functions played by the sanctuary lastly derives from the capacity to understand how, why and in which occasions humans entered and performed secular as well religious actions inside the sacred space, both as individuals and as communities.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Статията се занимава с антропологичното измерение на гръцкото светилище и се фокусира върху човешките действия, които се случват вътре в теменосите. Това е насочено към осигуряване на връзката между смъртните и боговете. Въпреки това, значението му се разпростира далеч извън чидно религиозната сфера. Освен основа за осъществяване на ритуалните действия, свещените области насърчават установяването на колективната идентичност, разпространението на политически послания, администрирането на публичната икономика, създаването на обща поведенческа система и познаването на законите. Следователно, правилното разбиране на различните функции, изпълнявани от светилището, в крайна сметка произтича от способността да се разбере как, защо и при какви случаи хората влизат и извършват светски, както и религиозни действия вътре в свещеното пространство, в качеството им на индивиди или общности.

KEYWORDS

Greek sanctuary; Greek society; polis; ancient public economy; temple; altar; votive offerings

Introduction

In the polytheistic religious system of the ancient Greek world, the sanctuary is primarily conceived as the space where humans can interact with the immortals. Each sanctuary is dedicated to a specific god or goddess, who is the owner of the whole consecrated area, which can, however, host additional divine beings or heros, in a complementary position. Hence, each *temenos* appears as a universe where various cults are bestowed, although one is the main deity possessing the consecrated area and worshipped through periodical communitarian festivals.

Sacred territory can be located, especially in the most ancient phases, near natural spots such as springs, hills, rocky prominences, caves and woods, regarded as places where contact with deities is easier, facilitated by the particular environment, where the divine presence can be felt more directly. However, in the regions where the urban settlement model is established, the cult space gradually tends to leave aside such rural locations and to be defined, in the framework of urbanized areas, rather by

ideological choices, determined by cultural, socio-political and economic motivations. Consequently, the complex of ritual practices and places of worship of a *polis* begins to constitute, in an increasingly conscious manner, the most direct and visible expression of community identity and its continuity over time.

In fact, the meaning of the sanctuary goes beyond the religious sphere. Besides providing the appropriate spatial and architectural context for the performance of the main ritual actions, it represents one of the primary vehicles for the transmission of political messages, the cohesion of the urban community, the periodical strengthening of the sense of community, the exhibition of the social articulation for roles and classes of the civic body, the self-celebration of 'excellent' individuals and exponents of representative groups, as well as the functioning of the city-state economy. Such aspects integrate and overlay with the *polis'* legislative corpus and management of public assets, that largely coincide, at least up to the late-Classical Age, with the sacred ones.

In recent decades, the research on the sacred space has experienced a notable increase, resulting in a decisive advancement of the state of the art, especially in relation to the knowledge of the plan and external look of the architectural structures, thanks to the discoveries brought to light by the archaeological excavations and to the scientific reflections on ancient Hellenic religiosity. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take a further step forward, focusing on the human, anthropological aspect of religious places. So far, this aspect has been in fact less examined in the academic literature, often characterized by a descriptive approach aimed at reflecting on the structure and decoration of buildings and monuments. Therefore, one of the problems still open in the analysis of the sanctuaries concerns precisely the understanding of the exact functions of the architectural structures, whose exegesis is still partly obscure. In fact, their interpretation depends to a large extent on the ability to inquire the ways and the forms sacred areas were frequented by individuals and communities, as well as with which purposes humans entered inside them. By reflecting on the human dimension of the sanctuary, it is perhaps possible to infer the actual meaning of its constituent elements, reintegrating them into that system of behaviors, beliefs and ideas that had originally determined their realization.

The brief considerations that follow aim, obviously without any claim of exhaustiveness, to place the *temenos* in the broader horizon of the discussion on the socio-economic organization of the *polis*, outlining a concise picture on the multiple forms of human activities taking place in

the space of the immortal gods. The final scope is to lay down the groundwork for subsequent reflections on the ultimate meaning of the Greek sanctuary, of its structures and their reciprocal relations, highlighting their complexity and heterogeneity, as well as their connections with human needs and expectations.

Actions performed by individuals in the sacred space

In order to understand the function and meaning of the sanctuary's architectures (and also of the constructive interruptions between them, represented by the numerous open-air areas located within the sacred boundaries), it is necessary to briefly examine the several types of human activities carried out inside the divine space. Therefore, the proper comprehension of the sanctuary's different functions lastly derives from the capacity to understand how, why and in which occasions humans entered the sacred area and performed actions inside it.

The organization of the sacred district depends largely, as already anticipated, by the need to identify a place where the possibility of dialoguing and interacting with superhuman entities is granted. The sanctuary gives the humans the chance to get in touch with divine beings, whose capacity to influence and to affect human affairs is recognized by the society. Consistently, the sacred area has to address the needs linked both to the individuals and to the collective body gathered for the celebration; in some cases, the latter can also assume a 'supranational' character, for instance when individuals and groups come from different *poleis* to attend festivals and games, as happens in Panhellenic sanctuaries.

The worshipper may feel the need to enter the *temenos* autonomously to pray, to invoke divine help in particular situations, to request the healing from an illnesses (especially in the cases of the *Asklepieia*), to dedicate offers, as a thank-you or to obtain a benefit, to report the personal passage from one *status* to another, to serve the divinity, or even, often, for reasons that transcend the strictly religious dimension and fall in the social, political or even economic, business field instead.

The actions implemented inside a sanctuary vary in relation to the divinity owning the consecrated area, since the different figures of the Greek *pantheon* answer diversified needs, correlated to the different requests, problems, fears, hopes and wishes of the human beings. Each divine entity thus becomes a reference point for a particular sector, such as fertility, protection during childbirth and birth, childhood, adolescence, beginning of the adult life, consulting before relevant decisions, artistic

expression, science, medicine, competitive contests, war, life beyond death and so on.

The religious place must therefore be primarily (but not only) able to welcome the individual worshipper, to make him/her feel comfortable in contacting the deities, thus facilitating the connection with the divine world, to allow him/her to move freely in order to fulfill prayers and rituals, to host the offers, at the same time guaranteeing them the proper visibility.

The statue, located in the temple, played a considerable role in private worship. The cult image is certainly one of the main expressions of polytheism, even if it is difficult to correctly understand the meaning assigned to the idol, perceived as a tangible expression of the divine presence. The *eidolon* becomes the centre of both collective and private devotion practices and can be treated as a real living being, being dressed, washed, transported, fed and, in some cases, people can even proceed to take revenge upon it.² When the worshipper needed a divine intervention or wanted to thank the immortals, often referred to the simulacrum, as it can be elicited from literary sources, starting from Heraclitus, which stigmatised the fact that men prayed to the statues, as “if they could hear them”.³ In addition to the words spoken before the divine sculptural representation,⁴ the worshipper could express his/her devotion by kissing it,⁵ whispering it in its ear,⁶ attaching tablets with inscribed requests to it, embracing it as well as kneeling in front of it.⁷

Often, the human presence inside the sanctuary was accompanied by the offer of an object, which is one of the simplest gestures a man can use to give tangible form to the relationship established with the divinity.

Some of these objects must be interpreted as material transpositions of the gift promised by the worshipper to the god when a vow was made, after his request has been answered.

The individual commitment can be expressed, in accordance with his/her intent and *status*, through gifts ranging from objects lacking an actual economic value or anyway bought at low cost, such as a lock of hair, a sandal, a belt or a terracotta votive statuette, to prestigious goods, such

² Lippolis, E. Le immagini di culto, in E. Lippolis - M. Osanna, *I pompeiani e i loro dei. Culti, rituali e funzioni sociali a Pompei*, Roma 2017, p. 207).

³ Herakl. 22 B 5 (Diels-Kranz).

⁴ Hdt. I 31.

⁵ Cic. *Verr.* II 4, 94.

⁶ Paus. VII 22, 2 sgg.; Sen. *ep.* 41, 1.

⁷ Bettinetti, S. *La statua di culto nella pratica rituale greca*, Bari 2001, p. 16).

as tripods and bronze cauldrons, golden and silver precious jewels and vessels, marble statues or even architectural structures.⁸

The frequentation of the sacred space by the individuals and the related gifts to the gods, therefore, represents a first factor of impact on the sanctuary space.

The dedication of small-sized offers, such as bronze items, comprising pottery⁹ and anthropomorphic images, terracotta materials including miniaturistic statuettes representing human figures (often identified with the worshipper and more rarely with the divinity),¹⁰ animals, fruits, anatomical parts, pots and vessels, *pinakes*,¹¹ in fact entails the identification of an exhibition location within the sacred area, in order to ensure, at least for a certain period, the visibility of the gift. This place, for most of the sacred contexts, can no longer be recognized, since a large portion of the terracotta figurines were found in secondary deposition contexts, also due to the periodic *repulisti* following which the area was freed of votives, collected and buried in special deposits.¹² Occasionally, it is possible to hypothesize that some objects were placed next to the altar or the cult statue¹³ or that others, such as the *pinakes*, were hung on the walls of the buildings, as suggested by the presence of holes.¹⁴

Philological and epigraphic sources provide, in some cases, information about the presence and location of prestigious offers in the sanctuaries. Conversely, the available documentation does not always contain sufficient information to identify the places where objects with lower economic value, offered by the 'common man' (which had to represent the most conspicuous portion of the total dedications) were located. With respect to many sanctuaries, therefore, the question about the original location of the numerous non-prestigious gifts, still remains unanswered.

⁸ See, for instance, the Sicyonian *monopteros* perhaps erected by the *tyrannos* Cleisthenes in the Delphic sanctuary, the *tholos* commissioned by Philip II at Olympia or the propylaeum of Ptolemy II at Samothrace.

⁹ On the bronze vessels from the Acropolis of Athens, see Tarditi (2016).

¹⁰ Lippolis, E. (2001); Lippolis, E. (2014).

¹¹ The reliefs could be made in terracotta, but also in wood (although its perishability caused the loss of most of the specimens in this material) and in stone.

¹² For a review of the votive deposits in Magna Graecia, vd. Parisi (2017), with previous bibliography.

¹³ Decrees reported in several epigraphs authorize the priest of the sanctuary to remove the various votives that prevent the vision of the cult statue.

¹⁴ Van Straten, F. Votives and Votaries in Greek Sanctuaries, in A. Schachter *et al.*, *Le Santuaire Grec*, Geneva 1990, pp. 247-290.

Although marked by cheap price and often mass-manufactured, nevertheless such small-sized terracotta offers implied the existence of several production workshops, in some cases located inside or next to the sanctuary, and, possibly, even of business multi-layered networks, delivering the items from the productions centers to the peripheral shops.

Other small offerings could include corals, seals, ivory objects, jewelry in *faïence* or precious metals, musical instruments, and so on. An overview of the plurality of objects that can be dedicated is provided, for example, by the findings recovered at the *Heraion* of Samos. The excavations brought to light: Wood and coral finds; golden objects; bronze items from Egypt, from Syria, from Phrygia, from Assyria; pottery from Corinth, from Sparta and from Etruria, as well as from other micro-Asiatic cities; Cypriot statues; objects in ivory and *faïence* from Egypt and the Near East. Such items, in many cases imported, also prove the existence of an extended network of trade contacts and commercial routes.

On the other hand, among the private offers consisting in imposing and prestigious gifts for the gods, testified by ancient authors, it is worth mentioning, as examples, the ark of wood, gold and ivory donated by the tyrant Kypselos and placed in the Corinth *thesauros* at Olympia or the chariot of the tyrant Cleisthenes exposed in the treasure of Sicyon at Delphi.

Moreover, costly *agalmata* made out of expensive bronze or stone materials, often marble, usually connoted by anthropomorphic forms, such as the statues of *korai* and *kouroi* attested from the Orientalizing Age and especially during the Archaic one, are attested too. In this case, there is a need to adapt the sacred area to the need of exhibiting these sculptural works, ensuring them proper prominence. This request for visibility was pursued both by designing open-air spaces, free from constructions, located between the worship buildings or along the *hiera odos*, where the statues, with their bases, could be clearly visible, becoming almost a sort of attraction for visitors, as well as by erecting closed and roofed spaces where these sculptural masterpieces, together with other valuables, could be preserved from atmospheric agents or from any act of depredation.

The Acropolis of Athens is one of the most significant cases under this profile. Here numerous standing clothed female statues are dedicated over a fairly long time, although it is not always easy to establish a clear relationship between the sex and the motivation of the dedicator (often a male), and the represented subject (often a female). In some cases, the dedication, as for Antenor's *kore* offered by the ceramographer Nearchos, is aimed to declare the socio-economic *status* achieved by the offerer, in the context of a historical conjuncture that saw the enrichment of the

artists engaged in vascular production and decoration. Such artists could become so wealthy that they could dedicate expensive marble statues in the sanctuaries, as the aristocrats themselves.

The presence of a dedicatory inscription bearing the name of the offerer is not unusual, accompanying many of the best known *kouroi* and *korai* discovered in the Greek sanctuaries (think of Nikandre's *kore* from the Artemision of Delos (650 B.C), of the colossal *kouros* (h 5 m) dedicated by Isches in the *Heraion* of Samos (570 B.C.), of two draped *korai* by Cheramyas in the same *temenos*, of the Moschophoros dedicated by Rhombos on the Athenian Acropolis, perhaps for the victory in the panathenaic competitions). These expensive gifts are also meant to declare the offerer's belonging to the community and to stress his/her socio-economic status.

Especially in the context of Panhellenic sanctuaries, it is reasonable to assume that the statue was donated by athletes because of the victory reported in the contests; numerous attestations of statues of winning athletes (called *andriantes*) of this type are in fact documented at Olympia, as indicated by the inscribed bases and by the written sources (consider, for example, the still preserved base of the statue, probably made by Policletus, of Kyniskos of Mantinea, winner in the *pankration* in 464-460 B.C.).¹⁵

In many cases, even for colossal statues, the original position within the *temenos* is no longer understandable, due to the discovery often in a secondary position and no longer in connection with the base borrowing the dedicatory inscription.

Other occasions of dedication of statues may coincide with the conclusion of a period of service at the sanctuary. Among the exemplary documents in this regard, some dedicatory inscriptions may be mentioned, connected to sculptural offerings erected by the *arrepheoroi* at the Acropolis of Athens (see, for instance, IG II² 3488 and IG II² 1034).

It should be noted that the different social background of the dedicants impact the possibility of tracing the identity of the offerer. Unfortunately, this identity remains unknown for the most part of the countless perishable or modest objects dedicated inside sanctuaries. On the contrary, in the case of items marked by a consistent economic value, such as stone statues, it is possible in some cases to reconstruct at least the name of the dedicator. Finally, for political renown personalities it is sometimes

¹⁵ The same athletes could also dedicate in the sanctuaries' prizes obtained in athletic competitions, such as panathenaic amphorae or crowns.

possible, with the help of written documentation, to go back to the author of the offer and to the occasion of the dedication.

The worshipper may also, under certain circumstances, visit the sanctuary in order to make sacrifices, to be performed also on secondary altars (although in this case they are not accompanied by the ceremonial sequence usually carried out by the collective body, which will be discussed below).

Private sacrifices can be spontaneous or prescribed by specific regulations, differing from one sanctuary to another. For example, an epigraph, placed at the entrance to the *Létôon* of Xanthos, enunciated the rules that the worshipper had to observe in the area, among which there was the prohibition of spending the night in the *stoai* without first offering a sacrifice.¹⁶

The individual can also go to the sanctuary because of the need or willingness to take an oath, to perform propitiatory rituals before the departure for the war or for a trip or in any case for a dangerous situation, to consult an oracle, to carry out particular rituals, such as initiatory or 'passage' ones. Some of these 'services' are not offered by all the sanctuaries, but can be a prerogative of some categories of *temene*: For instance, the possibility of consulting an oracle was granted only by oracular sacred areas. So, the architectural planning of each sanctuary must respond to its specific features.

The 'rite of passage' lays in an intermediate position between the individual dimension, i.e. the person who 'passes' from one condition to another (for example in conjunction of events such as childbirth, achievement of adulthood, marriage and so on), and the collective one, i.e. the community that recognizes the transition and from which the individuals moves away from temporarily, to be later integrated with again.

The topographic dislocation of the extraurban sanctuaries, far from the city, makes them suitable areas to carry out of rites of passage, with particular reference to the youth initiations destined both to the male and female universe, often characterized by the three fundamental moments of the exit, segregation and reintegration into society: Before becoming part of the social body of the *polis*, the young person physically moves away from it, spending a period in a separate sacred area (but still included in the urban socio-political system), before being re-integrated and re-accepted.

The passage of the individual from one stage to another of his life can also be marked, as well as by a specific rite, again by the dedication of an

¹⁶ Le Roy C. Le Létôon, sanctuaire fédéral, monuments et inscriptions, in *Dossiers d'Archéologie*, 239 (1998), pp. 38-50.

offer in the sanctuary. This includes the offer of work tools, such as the instruments of the agricultural work of farmers, the tools of the craftsmen, the bows and arrows of the hunters, offered by the workers at the time of retirement from their professional life, thus documenting the transition to the old age, or that of toys, that testifies the passage to adulthood. The girls, when becoming women, ready to dedicate themselves to the marriage, offer, inside the sanctuary, their childhood toys and, at the time of the wedding, also their belt to Artemis, patron of their youth.¹⁷

In some respects, even the dedication of the bloody clothes belonging to the women deceased of childbirth to Iphigenia, in the sanctuary of Artemis in Brauron, in Attica, also registers a 'passage' and can therefore be read in this perspective. On the contrary, gratitude for the success of the birth resulted in the gift to Ilithia or Artemis of sandals, ribbons for the hair, clothes, belts.

The inventories of the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia in Athens, however, record the presence of different items of clothing, providing an accurate description of each of them, the pertaining names of the dedicants together with the places where they were stored, in special containers or placed directly on the *simulacrum*. The gifts of clothes were offered on the occasion of the critical biological and social moments experienced by the woman, such as puberty, marriage and partum.

Likewise, at the shrine of the Ninfa on the south-western slopes of the Acropolis of Athens, many specimens of *loutrophoroi* have been brought to light. These vases were used for the pre-nuptial bath, as shown in this case by the depicted scenes, and were probably dedicated by the bride, after the conclusion of the marriage ceremony.

Under the same standpoint, it is also worth remembering the dedication of hair, which is a widespread phenomenon in the ancient Greek world and still persistent in some modern religious cultures. At the time of their entry into adulthood, teenagers used to cut their hair and offer them to a local divinity or hero. The practice is attested for example at Delos, where, near the tomb (in the sanctuary of Artemis) of Iperoche and Laodice (girls belonging to the heroic Iperborei), "the maidens cut a lock of hair before the wedding, they wrap it around a spindle and they deposit it in the tomb [...], where all the boys of Delos tie a lock of hair to a tuft of grass and also dedicate it to the grave" (Hdt IV 34, 1-2).

¹⁷ Burkert W. *La religione greca di epoca arcaica e classica*, Milano 2003, p. 169.

Perhaps attributable to the same sphere is the presence, in the *temene*, of weapons and other objects referring to the war, including spearheads, arrows, javelins, shields, armor, greaves.

In this case it is not always possible to decode the circumstance that accompanied the offer. The dedication of weapons can be interpreted as a means to thank the divinity for a war victory achieved or as a preliminary offer to ask success in a war; however, the discovery of miniaturized weapons makes it possible to hypothesize that the dedication accompanied, at least in certain contexts, the rites of passage to adulthood, marked, for the boys, by the capacity to use weapons.

Consequently, the traditional image of the worshipper who goes to the sanctuary exclusively to pray, to thank the gods or to ask them for help, to carry out a sacrifice or to dedicate an offer, does not exhaust the plurality of circumstances that pushed the individual to enter the *temenos*. The idea that humans accessed the *temenos* only for these purposes returns a very partial and limited vision of the many opportunities for interaction between human beings and divine space. This image depends to a large extent on the modern perception of ancient religiosity, a perception that does not properly consider the central and pervasive nature of sacred practices in the Greek society, resulting in an indissoluble bond between the divine sector and society, politics, economy, health, fertility, family, life and death of the individual and the human group.

Consistently, there were further reasons why human beings entered the divine space. Such reasons were not only connected to the religion and to the veneration of the gods, but can be traced back, for example, to the need for medical care, especially in the case of the *Asklepieia*.¹⁸ In this case, the *temene* dedicated to healing were required to respect certain conditions, which influenced their internal structure and organisation, such as the need to have rooms for medical procedures; spaces for the night incubation of the sick individual, who was visited, during his/her dreams, by the divinity, such as the *abaton*; areas for the reception of the sick persons as well as of the accompanying family members; not uncommon were libraries as well as pools, fountains and other facilities related to the use of water, which fulfilled the curative and lustral needs of the pilgrims.

¹⁸ Associations of *Asklepiadai* are attested since the Archaic Age; in some centres they are a sort of *gene* in which a thaumaturgical and medical knowledge is handed down from one generation to another. Such enlarged families claim to be descendants of Asclepius through its two mythical sons, Machaon and Podaleirius. The worship of Asclepius increases after the great plague of 430 B.C. and several renowned *Asklepieia* were located in Epidaurus, Corinth, Kos.

The dedications made as thanks for the obtained healing include medical instruments,¹⁹ reproductions of anatomical parts made of terracotta, metal plaques with inscriptions reminiscent of the miraculous intervention of the god who healed the sick, reliefs representing the sacrifice to Asclepius, Iphigenia or other divinities or heroes connected to health or depicting the miraculous episode during which the healing process took place. For example, the *Amphiareion* of Oropos has returned a votive relief,²⁰ dedicated by Archinos in the first half of the IV century B.C., depicting what he had seen during incubation in the *enkoimeterion*, this is, on the left, his shoulder treated by Amphiaraos and, on the right, a snake which was licking his shoulder while he was asleep.

The inventories of the shrine of Asclepius in Athens document the existence of anatomical votives in metal, extremely rare in the archaeological documentation, reporting also their exact arrangement inside the temple where, together with figured metal plaques, coins and other types of offers, they were hung on the walls, on the wooden truss of the roof or even laid in the hand of the god's statue.

Some offers dedicated by individuals in the sanctuaries may not represent the output of a spontaneous action, carried out on a voluntary basis, but can instead be the result of a legal obligation of the citizens towards the main divinity of the *polis*. For example, at the *Heraion* of Samos, the interaction between the worshipper and the goddess was not limited to the ritual sphere, but featured important financial implications, given that citizens were required to pay a specific amount of money or of precious objects, representing a percentage of their earnings, to the goddess. The sanctuary of Hera also ensured protection to private deposits belonging to wealthy individuals, who needed a safe place where to preserve their assets.

In fact, according to Herodotus (Hdt. IV 152, 4), the inhabitants of Samos used the tenth of their income to create a colossal bronze vase, resting on gigantic kneeling figures, to be placed in the *Heraion*. In this case, the offer is the transposition of an economic obligation of the citizens towards the goddess who owns the sanctuary.

¹⁹ Medical instruments are recorded, for example, in the inventory of the sanctuary of Asclepius at the Piraeus (*IG I² 47*).

²⁰ Hausmann U. *Kunst und Heilum: Untersuchungen zu den griechischen Asklepiosreliefs*, Potsdam 1948, p. 169; Van Straten F. Gifts for the gods, in H.S. Versnel (Ed.), *Faith, hope and worship. Aspects of religious mentality in the ancient world*, Leiden 1981, pp. 65-151, part. pp. 124-125).

Similarly, around 580-570 B.C., some inhabitants of Perinthos, originally from Samos, dedicated a *dekate* calculated over their income to the *Heraion*, once again in the form of votive objects made out of precious metal (gold, silver and bronze) for a value corresponding to about 210 Samian staters (SEG XII 391). Since Perinthos was a colony of Samos, there are sufficient elements to assume that the offerers were indeed settlers, required to contribute to the financial resources of the main Samian shrine, like the inhabitants of Samos themselves, through the dedication of a share of their earnings.

As discussed elsewhere,²¹ the importance of the economic role of Greek sanctuaries, especially for the Archaic and Classical ages, has a more decisive role than has been assumed up to now. The sanctuaries were definitely a fundamental element for the functioning of the Greek economy, hoarding and preserving huge reserves that overlapped with the public financial circuit and interfered in the private one.

The economic activities based in the sacred area were not limited to the religious sphere and, in fact, they were not restricted to the payment of sacred buildings, of restorations, of the sacrificial victims and so on. They included complex operations of collection, amassing and deposit of large sums of money and precious objects, especially made out of gold, silver and sometimes bronze (gathered through offers, fines, confiscations, *dekatai*, taxations on trade, freeing of slaves, maritime transit, income and so on) that can be converted into money when needed. The running of the sacred economy implied the existence of boards of treasurers and administrative collegia in charge of the relative management and required the existence of dedicated spaces, within the sanctuaries, where the relevant professional personnel could perform the related tasks. The employees of the sanctuary, in fact, are another category of private individuals who frequented it, in this case for work reasons.

Regarding the economic relationship between individuals and sacred space, it is well known that sanctuaries, in addition to acting as a real state treasury, a deposit fund for the community of the *polis*, carried out also financial operations dedicated to private individuals, such as loans, deposits and currency exchanges.

The practice of depositing funds by individuals is one of the first banking activities attested in the temples. It is documented in various

²¹ Sassu, R. *Hiera chremata. Il ruolo del santuario greco nell'economia della polis*, Roma 2014.

contexts, such as Samos,²² Ephesus,²³ Delphi,²⁴ Priene, Olimpia,²⁵ Tegea and Rhodes.

Moreover, the sanctuaries could carry out monetary exchange operations, documented, for example, in relation to the *naopoi* and *tamiai* of the Delphi sanctuary.

The sanctuaries collected funds, that could also become the basis to develop further complex economic strategies, till the point that some sacred areas were able to implement banking activities based on credit, on the possible calculation of interests, on the transfer of resources. From these transactions, accounting movements originated, in some cases articulated in a structured way and therefore equipped with elaborated administrative systems and methods.²⁶ In particular, loans were granted to two categories of subjects, i.e. cities or individuals, who could then go to the *temenos* to request or repay the loan.²⁷

²² The deposits were entrusted to the temples by virtue of the security they guaranteed, as Cicero later pointed out in the *De legibus*. The Latin author reports that Cleisthenes deposited his daughters' dowry in the temple of Hera in Samos, reputed to be extremely protected and safe (Cic. *De leg.* II 16).

²³ Even the temple of Artemis at Ephesus was renowned for the security ensured to deposits. In fact, Dio Chryostom states that depositing funds in the *Artemision* was extremely safe, because in case of necessary the *polis* would use the gold of the goddess but would not take the reserves of private citizens (XXXI 54-55). Artemidorus of Ephesus reported the same statement.

²⁴ However, the sanctuary of Delphi, as that of Samos, also served as a place of deposit for properties owned by private individuals, as indicated by the epigraph CID IV 2, studied by Lefèvre, F. Un document amphictionique inédit, *BCH* 118 (1994), pp. 99-112. id. Note additionelle (Un document amphictionique inédit). *BCH* 119 (1995), p. 573, and above all by the text of Plutarch on Lysander's life (Plut. *Vit. Lys.* 18, 3) (also corroborated by Anaxandridas of Delphi, author of a treaty on the looting of Delphi's offerings), which states that Lysander had put inside the sanctuary a deposit consisting of 1 talent, 52 mines, 11 stateres.

²⁵ Always in the V century B.C., the deposit of Zeuxias in the temple of Olympia is mentioned by a very damaged inscription on a bronze plate, pertaining to the temple (see H. *Inscriptiones Graecae antiquissimae*, Berolini, 1988, nr. 114).

²⁶ See Bogaert, R. De Bankzaken van de Griekse Tempels. in *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taalen Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*. 18, 1964, pp. 107-120. id. *Banques et banquiers dans les cites grecques*, Leiden 1968. For a valid overview on the state of the art see Chankowski, V. Les dieux manieurs d'argent : activités bancaire et formes de gestion dans les sanctuaires. Introduction, *Topoi* 12/13 (2005), pp. 9-11.; consider also Dauphin-Meunier, A. *Histoire de la banque*, Paris, 1959.

²⁷ Loan transactions are attested epigraphically in Delos, in Athens, in Ramnunte, in Olimpia, in Delphi, in the Attic demo of Mirrinunte, in Keos, in Ios and in Alicarnasso. For example, at the Attic demo of Mirrinunte, a legislative regulation, *IG* II² 1183, es-

Precisely the analysis of the economic transactions carried out in the sanctuaries sheds light on the heterogeneity of people attending the sanctuaries. If predominantly ordinary citizens apply for loans, the deposit actions are instead linked to wealthy people, in some cases recognizable in political personalities, such as Clisthenes or Lycurgus.

So, the actions of the common man in the sanctuary differs from those performed by the 'excellent' personaliy, with regard to the traces left, that can be observed at an archaeological and philological-literary level.

Emerging figures are indeed able to exploit the propaganda potential offered by a place of high visibility such as the sanctuary, often commissioning entire architectural constructions, that proclaim their power and perpetuate their fame. Among the most representative cases, the involvement of the Alcmeonids in the construction of the temple of Apollo in Delphi may be mentioned, in antagonism to the contextual Pisistratides' construction of the temple of Athena *Polias* on the Athenian Acropolis; the dedication by the pharaoh Amasis of statues at the *Heraion* of Samos and at the *Athenaion* at Cyrene, as well as his financial commitment for the reconstruction of the temple of Apollo at Delphi; the offer, dedicated by Alexander the Great in the sanctuary of Zeus in Dion, of the group of the companions deceased in the Granicus, sculpted by Lysippus; the erection of the *Philippeion* in the sanctuary of Olympia by Philip II; the *Arsinoeion* erected by Arsinoe II and the *propylaeum* by Ptolemy II at the sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace; the sculptural groups, celebrating the victory over the Galatians, dedicated by the Attalids at the Athena sanctuaries in Athens and Pergamus; the *stoa* erected by Attalus I in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, that of Antigonus Gonata in the sanctuary of Apollo in Delos and so on.

Besides the offer, including that responding to propaganda purposes, further opportunities for interaction between individuals and sanctuaries could derive from the renting of land or sacred buildings,²⁸ from the purchase

establishes that individuals who need money can borrow it from the divinity, upon presentation of a guarantee, which can be represented by a landed property, a house or another property of equivalent value. The Plotheia demo, as shown in the registration IG I³ 258, 39 dated to the last quarter of the fifth century BC, establishes the appointment of a panel of magistrates responsible for the management of the sacred funds, enucleating the rules for their administration. A part of the money (maybe 22.100 drachmas) can be lent to private individuals, provided they can show solid guarantees.

²⁸ Revenues from the possession of sacred land (*hiera chora*) and incomes deriving from its rental or from the sale of the agricultural products are widely attested in Asia Minor (Chankowski (2005) p. 83); among the most documented case studies it is

of relative crops and products deriving from the possession of livestock herds and from the buying and selling of the skins of the sacrificed animals. Thus, individuals could pay sums in exchange for the availability of sacred lands, buildings, products deriving from agriculture etc.

The functioning of the sacred system involves the existence of an organised management system, composed not only of priestly bodies, but also of colleges of treasurers, secretaries, administrative staff, widely documented by the available epigraphic sources. Their tasks mainly concerned the periodic inventory of available funds; keeping the register of expenses and incomes; the management of the offers and of the dedications, whether they were given by individuals, colleges of public or religious magistrates or entire *poleis*; the control of the incomes deriving from the possession and rental of landed property,²⁹ as well as from the sale of their products and from breeding herds,³⁰ from the profits deriving from the sacrifices, from the *dekate*³¹ and the various forms of taxation and duties,³² interests calculated on lent money,³³ in the case of sanctuaries

worth mentioning the sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda. Income deriving from tenure is also attested in other Hellenic regions, as indicated, for instance, by the decree dating back to the mid-V cent. B.C. from the Attic deme of Plotheia, reporting the revenues obtained through the rental of the sacred land, corresponding to 134 drachmas and 2 obols (IG I³ 258. Analysis in Whitehead 1986). In the demes of Piraeus and Rhamnous, some decrees lay down general rules for the leasing of lands pertaining to a *temenos* (cf. IG II² 2498, a Piraeus decree dated to 321/320 (eponymous archon); IG II² 2493, about the leasing of a *temenos* in Rhamnous, dating to 339/338, ll. 12-13; see also Jameson, M. The Leasing of Land in Rhamnous, in *Studies in Attic Epigraphy, History and Topography Presented to Engene Vanderpool, Hesperia, Suppl.* 19 (1982), pp. 66-74) and in the deme of Aixone a tax over the right of pasture, the *ennomia*, was levied (IG II² 1196, a large fragment of the assembly decree of Aixon, dating to 326/325 BC). However, the management of sacred land is not homogenous and varies from place to place: certain lands could be exploited for economic purposes, such as in Athens (Arist. *Politeia*, 47) and some lands could not be cultivated in order not to incur into sacrilege (this is the case of the *hiera land* of Delphi).

²⁹ For the sacred and secular land properties in Athens refer to Papazarkadas, N. *Sacred and Public Land in Ancient Athens*, Oxford 2011. Please also consider Jameson (1982).

³⁰ On the herds owned by the shrines, see Isager, S. Sacred and prophane ownership of land, in *Agriculture in Ancient Greece*, in *Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens*, Stockholm 1992.

³¹ According to Mattingly, H. Athenian Finance in the Peloponnesian War, *BCH* 92/2 (1968), it is possible that the *dekate* on the revenues from the Laurion mines merged into the treasures of the Athenian Acropolis; similarly, the inhabitants of Samos were required to pay the tenth of their earnings to the extra-urban *Heraion* (see *infra*).

³² The heterogeneity of the funds collected by sacred areas is observable in several documented contexts, such as the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis, that forfeit fees

that practiced banking activities, fines, expropriations and confiscations,³⁴ the forfeiture of war booties.

Not only the *temenos* promoted economic growth, but it also acted as a large-scale employer, involving both permanent and temporary staff. In addition to priests, *neokoroi*, *tamiai* and other figures permanently employed and in charge of ensuring the proper functioning of the sacred area, also variously qualified external contractors had a preminent role in the management of the consacred area.

For example, the erection of a sacred building involved the hiring of both local and external professional figures, including architects, planners, but also stonemasons, transporters, blacksmiths, sculptors, stonecutters, carpenters, craftsmen, painters and so on, as it can be elicited from several epigraphic reports, such as those relating to the Delphi sanctuary.³⁵

Farmers were also employed, to work in the sacred field and often as main suppliers of the animal labor force used for the transport of construction materials, especially starting from VII century B.C., when the stone was regularly used for the constructions of sacred buildings. Architectural planning, therefore, involved citizens, free inhabitants and

from initiates, donations from worshippers, ownership of agricultural lands, taxes over-fishing. Such complex of incomes made the treasure of the goddesses so consistent that it could lend money to Athens during economic hardships. Similarly, a decree of the Acarnian League (*IG IX 1/2*, 583. For the *editio princeps* see Habicht, C. Eine Urkunde des akarnanischen Bundes, *Hermes* 85 (1957), pp. 86-122) mentions, among the funds available for the functioning of Apollo sanctuary, the taxes collected at the harbor during the festivals in honor of the god. Moreover, taxes over the fishing of the *murex* or on ship traffic between Rheneia and Mykonos were levied by the temple of Apollo at Delos, as pointed out by Linders, T. Sacred Finances: Some Observations, in T. Linders - B. Alroth (Eds.), *Economics of cult in the ancient Greek world*, Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1990 (Boreas 21), Uppsala 1992, pp. 9-14, part. p. 10.

³³ See Dauphin-Meunier, A. (1959) on loans with interest granted by temples. The extent of the sanctuary credit transactions and their ability to generate profits has, however, been recently reexamined by Linders, T. (1992) p. 11).

³⁴ As far as confiscations are concerned, the sanctuary at Halicarnassus confiscated the properties of the insolvent debtors, that were sold and whose revenues were deposited as cash money inside the temple, as documented by an inscription, dated back to the end of the V cent. B.C., with the list of the buildings and other possessions that were sold, for a total of seven talents (*Syll³* 46, partic. ll. 1-65). Confiscations of properties belonging to those who did not pay fines are attested in relation to the sanctuary of Athena at Argos. Income from the sale of confiscated property to the inhabitants of the defeated Cleonai demos are recorded in the accounts of Hera's extra-urban sanctuary (Kritzas M. *Nouvelles inscriptions d'Argos : Les archives des comptes du tresor sacré*, CRAI, 2006).

³⁵ Spawforth, T. *The complete Greek temples*, London, 2006.

slaves, including prisoners of war led to forced labor. Likewise, the celebrations created job opportunities for a considerable number of professional figures, from musicians to garlands' sellers, from butchers to cooks and attendants, so that the Greek sanctuary can also be conceived as a large-size company.³⁶

From these brief observations, the multifaceted nature of individuals accessing the sanctuary emerges. The actors entering the *temenos* are indeed variously linked to the divine area by sacred, contractual, professional, financial, medical, social and political bonds. These include, as it has been stressed, worshippers, pilgrims, sick people in search of healing, young people about to initiate their adult and married life, women looking for a pregnancy or waiting for childbirth, winner athletes wishing to thank the god or to publicly show their victory, political leaders and statesmen who exploit the decorative apparatus of the sacred buildings to praise themselves and to deliver ideological messages, rulers who erect buildings to celebrate their own power, aristocrats who exhibit their own status and economic possibilities, enriched ceramographers who show the social position achieved, individuals seeking loans, wealthy people looking for a safe place to deposit their belongings, tenants, merchants, administrators, treasurers, priests, architects, artists, farmers, breeders, servants etc. Each of them has left a more or less visible trace of his/her passage, which transpire from literary texts and epigraphs or which is revealed in the buildings and in the findings brought to light, whether they are impressive monuments, prestigious items, simple objects made of terracotta or pertaining the daily life.

Collective actions performed in the sacred space

If individual actions performed in the sanctuary implied the necessity of adapting the sacred complex to private needs, collective activities had even a greater impact on the overall organisation of the *temenos*. The consecrated space, in fact, is one the key-factors in the establishment of a unitary communitarian consciousness and is intrinsically connected to the birth and consolidation of the Greek *polis*, as it has been already duly underlined by F. de Polignac in *La naissance de la cité grecque*.³⁷

After an initial phase during which sacred rituals are managed by the *basileus* (an improper term used in the scientific literature to indicate an

³⁶ Linders, T. (1992) p. 11.

³⁷ De Polignac F. *La naissance de la cité grecque. Cultes, espace et société, VIIIe-VIe siècles avant J.-C.*, Paris 1984.

emerging ruler in the post-*Dark Age* Greece, in charge of the administration and the redistribution of wealth), later on, the right to run the rituals extends to the whole ruling class and, subsequently, following a process of progressive enlargement of participation and 'democratization', to the whole community, although in different forms and modalities.

The broadening of the participation in the sacred celebrations of the community entails an increase and a novel organisation of the sacred spaces, that, in a first phase, are characterized mainly by the presence of the altar and the adjoining sacrificial space for the implementation of the ritual action. Such a new organisation goes along with a functional specialization of the architectural buildings. In this framework, the temple starts to spread, being added to the *bomos* in order to host and preserve the cult statue, perceived as a personification of the god on earth, the cult instruments as well as prestigious objects marked by a consistent economic value.

Some of the older temples fulfilled a plurality of tasks, that were subsequently assigned to different buildings. The presence of benches in the so-called *temple à banquette*, attested in structures of VIII and VII century. B.C. such as the temples of Apollo at Dreros, of Dionysus at Yria of Naxos or the edifice B of Kommos at Crete,³⁸ suggests that the collective ritual meal in this first phase took place in the building itself, as indicated, *inter alia*, by the presence of the *eschara* to cook the sacrificial meat. Therefore, the temple was originally characterized by wider and more flexible functions, while later on, following a process of progressive architectural specialization, different types of buildings were developed in order to host the various activities taking place in the sanctuary. So, the ritual banquet shifted outside the *neos* and started to take place inside specific dedicated constructions, known as *hestiatoria*.

The human group, in order to create its own identity first and then to cyclically corroborate it, meets systematically in the sanctuary to carry out collective ritual practices, aimed at worshipping a commonly recognized divine entity. By doing so, the group perceives itself as belonging to a single community, which performs, on a regular basis, codified series of actions. The latter are expected to cause a positive result and are performed in honour of a god or of a hero. They strengthen the social bonds among the participants and sometimes include forms of inclusion and exclusion, given that differentiated rights of participation in the rituals

³⁸ Internal benches were also discovered inside the temple of Athena in Koukounaries, Paros (700 B.C.).

are granted to different groups (men, women, young people, adults, unmarried and married persons, freeborn citizens, foreigners and so on).

The collective participation in the rituals brings about the elaboration of a set of rules and behaviors, only partly reconstructable from the available sources, which, although varying from a geographical area to another and from one god to another, share a common religious language.

The main cult action is the sacrifice, which is the central moment of any religious celebration of the Greek-Roman world.

The ritual killing takes place according to an ordered and repeatable series of consequential actions, acquiring a canonical form at least from the Archaic Age.

Sacrifice, based on an organised liturgy, includes a complex of actions repeated according to a fixed protocol (subject to minor variations according to the god, the place and the period), which shares its main segments with similar religious practices of the Mediterranean area.³⁹ It includes:

- the *pompe* or ritual procession,
- the consecration of the victim (*katarchesthai*),
- the use of *chernips* (lustral water),
- the use of grains of barley and/or wheat,
- the prayer (in some cases, a lock of hair of the victim is being cut and offered to the deity)

³⁹ Clear affinities with the Jewish and Muslim rituals can be detected (see Leviticus 1-7). For the analogies between the Jewish and the Greek religious practice, see Bergquist, B. Bronze Age sacrificial koine in the Eastern Mediterranean? A study of animal sacrifice in the ancient Near East, in J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East*, Proceedings of the International Conference organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 17th-20th of April 1991 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta*, 55), Leuven 1993; Burkert, W. Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual, *GRBS* 7 (1966) part. p. 102; 1985, p. 5. See also Anderson, G. *Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in their social and political importance*, Atlanta 1987; Ebhart, C. *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*, Atlanta 2011; Gilders, W. *Blood ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power*, London 2004; Halbertal, M. *On Sacrifice*, Princeton 2012; Meshel, N. *The "Grammar" of Sacrifice*, Oxford 2014; Hastings, A. From Ritual to Grammar: Sacrifice, Homology, Metalanguage, *Language and Communication* 23 (2003); Hubert, H. and Mauss, M. *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice*, Paris 1929²; Levine, B. Ritual as Symbol: Modes of Sacrifice in Israelite Religion, in Gittlen, B.M. (Ed.), *Sacred Time, Sacred Place*, Winona Lake, 2002; Watts, J. The Rhetoric of Ritual Instruction in Leviticus 1-7, in R. Rendtorff, R., and Kugler, R. (Ed.), *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, Leiden 2003.

Watts, J. *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture*, Cambridge 2007; id. *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture*, Cambridge 2007.

- the use of the ritual knife or *machaira*
- the killing (*sphazein*) through slaughter of the consecrated victim,
- the collection of the blood, which is poured over the altar,
- the division of the victim's portions between the human community and the gods,
- the incineration, over the altar, of the portion for the deity,
- the libations,
- the cooking,
- the eating,
- the final cleaning of the scene.

If, from a religious standpoint, the *thysia* and its corollary, i.e. the collective ritual meal, aim to strengthen the link between the sacrificers and the divinity, on the political and social level, they also have the effect of corroborating the unity and the bonds among the participants, as well as of defining the relationships between the members of the community and their internal groupings. In other words, the collective sacrifice provides at the same time the principle to ensure the social framing of the individual and to regulate the relationships between the human and the divine sphere.

Since the sanctuary constitutes a space for worship that, as properly underlined by Brigitta Bergquist,⁴⁰ answers first the practical needs connected to the correct implementation of the sacrificial ritual, this aspect coherently plays a primary role in the spatial distribution as well as in the reciprocal interrelations of the sacred buildings.

Therefore, the most relevant element within a *temenos* is the altar and the surrounding space for the accomplishment of the ritual killing. In some sacred areas, the space dedicated to the sacred slaughtering is equipped with a system for the hecatombes to be performed on the periodical celebrations. Hence, the *bomos* and the adjoining area are both mandatory elements of the Greek sanctuary: The sanctuary cannot exist without them and they are lastly more important than the temple (which, in many cases, appears to be built at a later stage).

The temple, on the other hand, in addition to acting as the 'house of the god', plays a special role in the representation of the community, being one of its most symbolic monuments. The temple itself is the result of a redistribution of the collective assets, invested in the construction of a building that attracts the attention of the visitors and that celebrates the

⁴⁰ Bergquist, B. *The Archaic Greek Temenos*, Stockholm 1967.

dedicating community through its monumentality and its sculptural decoration.

As for the ritual, the temple is also connected to the sacrificial action, allowing the divinity, represented by the cult statue, to attend the celebration: In fact, the temple is usually aligned with the altar, in order to allow the deity to watch the religious killing of the victim.

Regarding the *pompe*, that proceeds the climax of the ceremony, i.e. the ritual killing, the community moves towards and inside the sacred area in procession. The latter is regulated by specific religious laws and is also an occasion to exhibit the social structure of the *polis*. The importance of the *pompe* lies in its relevant aggregative function, since, through participation in a public 'parade' that meets the self-representation needs of all the participants, the social body underlined its hierarchical internal relations; paradigmatic cases, in this regard, are represented by the Panathenaic festivals at Athens.

The rules applied to the procession in honor of *Hera* at Samos foresaw, for instance, a dress code that dictated the use of long white robes, golden bracelets, and an articulated hairstyle in braids decorated with golden cicadas-shaped hair-pins.⁴¹ In this as in other cases, the solemn procession towards the *temenos* and towards the altar proceeds along a monumental road, the *hiera odos*. The sacred way defines and sacralize the path, underling the religious character of the action, requiring the group to proceed together, sometimes with an organisation that reflects the internal arrangement of the society. Significantly, the most prestigious offers are emblematically placed along the *hiera odos*.

The procession can foresee the transport of sacred objects or of the divine statue itself, as it happens at the *Heraion* of Samos. So, the statue is removed from its house (the temple) and is carried outside the consecrated space, to be subsequently brought back to it.

In some cases, the simulacrum could be also carried from one *temenos* to another⁴² or, more frequently, could be brought to a place connected to the water where the sacred bath could take place.

The collective festival, which included the traditional sequence of procession, sacrifices (both bloody and bloodless ones) and banquet, could also be complemented by rituals implying representations of mythical tales connected to the local cult. This is the case of the *Thesmophoriai* or,

⁴¹ Athen. *Deipn.* XII 525e.

⁴² For example, in Laconia, the *xoanon* of *Kore* was annually carried from the sanctuary of Helos to the one on Mount Taygetus during the *Eleusinia*; in Patrai, the *xoanon* of *Artemis Laphria* was annually transported from the suburb Mesoa.

according to Clement of Alexandria, also of some female celebrations such as the *Skrophorie* and the *Arretophorie*, most likely connected with fertility rites in which the generative function of the earth was exalted, signaled by the invocation to the *Genetyllides*, to the *Kalligeneia* or to the *Kourotrophos*. Likewise, even in the celebrations taking place in *Heraion* of Samos, a representation of the *hieros gamos* between Zeus and *Hera*⁴³ was perhaps envisaged.

The collective liturgy also comprised fumigations, as indicated by the presence of *thymiateria* in the sanctuaries; of libations, as documented by the numerous *phialai*; of music, as testified by the several findings pertaining to musical instruments and by the written sources. Smells, sounds, visions, ritual formulas created a participatory atmosphere of intense emotional involvement.⁴⁴

As already stressed with regard to the individual actions in the sacred area, also the community is often the author of challenging offers, designed to pay homage to the divinity and, at the same time, to celebrate the dedicating human group. In this case, in addition to the archaeological evidence, the reconstruction is also based on the texts by the ancient authors, who often describe luxurious offers preserved inside the *temene*, including valuable objects, relics and *mirabilia* also related to historical and mythological events.

Among the most representative cases of offers made in the name of the *polis*, several monuments erected as a result of a war victory can be mentioned. Such monuments meant both to thank the divinity and to glorify the city and its military power. In this framework, besides the spoils of war and the relevant booties described by the ancient sources, specific monuments were dedicated. Among them: The monument dedicated by the winners of Platea, by the Spartans after Egospotami victory, by the

⁴³ The subject is still under debate and there is no unanimous agreement among the scholars. Possible indications of its existence may perhaps be elicited from a passage of Lactantius (Lact. *Inst. Div.* I 17,8), who openly asserts that the celebration foresees the ritual play of the marriage between *Hera*, adorned with a wedding dress, and her husband Zeus, as well as from the archaeological materials found, although their explanation is still controversial. Among these there is a wooden relief, dating back to the third quarter of VII a.C., depicting two embraced deities, a feminine and a masculine one, interpreted as a representation of the *hieros gamos* between Zeus and *Hera* (Ohly, D. Holz, *AM* 68 (1953); Walter, B. *Das griechische Heiligtum dargestellt am Heraion von Samos*, Stuttgart 1990).

⁴⁴ On the theme, see Chaniotis, A. (Ed.) *Ritual dynamics in the ancient Mediterranean. Agency, emotion, gender, representation*, Stuttgart 2011. id. *Unveiling emotions: Sources and methods for the study of emotions in the ancient Greek world*, Stuttgart 2012.

Athenians (the monument depicted the heroes of Marathon and is attributed to Pheidias), by Taras, that won over the Messapians and the Peuceti, in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. Similarly, in the same *temenos*, architectural structures were erected in order to stress other military victories, such as the *stoa* erected by the Aetolians for the defeat of the Gauls who had invaded the sanctuary⁴⁵ in 279 B.C. and previously, the one commissioned by the Athenians, containing maritime *spolia*, following the battle of Micalé of 480 B.C. Further *mnemata* of victories are represented by golden shield positioned on the east pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia by the Lacedaemonians following the victory at Tanagra on the Athenians (457 B.C.),⁴⁶ the monument with the Nike, attributed to Paionios of Mende, dedicated by the Messenians and Naupactians for the victory over the Lacedaemonians (425 B.C.) and located next to the eastern front of the same temple, the monumental tripod offered by the Plataeans for the victory over the Persians in the sanctuary of Delphi.

Furthermore, under some circumstances, public dedications can be independent from military victories and be rather marked by a merely self-celebratory purpose, as is the case of the *oikos* and the colossal *kouros* dedicated by Naxians at Delos or the statues in the shapes of lions placed along the sacred way in the *Artemision*, also in Delos.

Cause of their supra-national status, the Panhellenic sanctuaries were providing the suitable framework for the erection of *thesauroi*.⁴⁷ These buildings, used to preserve costly gifts offered to the divinity normally by a city-State or, in certain rare circumstances, by a particularly influential individual, such as a tyrant (anyway symbolizing the whole reference urban community), in order to demonstrate one's own economic power in front of the rest of the Greek world. Characterized by a plan similar to that of a small temple, usually with two columns *in antis*, they were intended for the exhibition of votive offerings and for the glorification of the *polis* that dedicated them. Such buildings start to spread during the VII and the VI century B.C. in the sanctuaries of Olympia and Delphi. The building of a

⁴⁵ Valavanis, P. *Games and Sanctuaries in Ancient Greece: Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, Nemea, Athens*, Athens 2004.

⁴⁶ Paus. V 10, 4.

⁴⁷ The most complete work on the *thesauroi* is Rups, M. *Thesaurus, a Study of the Treasury Buildings as Found in Greek Sanctuaries*, Ph.D, 1986. See also Dyer, L. Olympian Treasuries and Treasuries in General, in *JHS* 25 (1905), pp. 294-315; Roux, G. Tresors, temples, tholos, in *AA.VV., Temples et sanctuaires*, Paris 1984, pp. 153-172, partic. pp. 154-159.

thesauros was not merely a religious act, since it did not only aim to praise the divine protector through the offer of an economically valuable dedication (precious with regard both to the external structure and internal contents), but was also distinguished by relevant social and political connotations, being an instrument to celebrate the *polis* that was dedicating it. Political implications (more specifically, the creation of the *polis*' collective image as well as its representation in front of the other cities), were emphasized by the *thesauros*' architecture, which was always magnificent, notwithstanding the edifice's minute dimensions. The sculptural decoration frequently showed an evident connection with the dedicating city-state, by illustrating its myths (e.g. Athenians' *thesauros* in Delphi, decorated through images pertaining to Theseus' cycle) or glorifying it by means of the public exhibitions of trophies and prizes related to Pan-Hellenic games victories (see, for example, Myron and Sycion *thesauroi* in Olympia) or to the enemies' defeats (consider Thebes and Athens *thesauroi* in Delphi, that, according to Pausanias, were containing the battle spoils ensuing, respectively, the Leuttra and Marathon victories). In the sanctuaries marked by a greater concentration of *thesauroi*, these buildings, erected each time on the initiative of a single *polis*, over the terrace of Olympia or disorganically distributed along the *hiera odos* of Delphi, compete among them, each conceived with the purpose of excelling on others.

However, it should be stressed that impressive buildings and prestigious offers do not represent the 'typical' result of collective activities implemented inside the *temenos*. The actions carried out by the community in the sanctuary in fact leave, in most cases, less monumental and permanent traces. Moreover, they do not always mean to exalt the community as an organized socio-political structure; rather, in many cases, they do not have any intention to impress the observer, but they are just the remains of the ritual practices performed by the social groups of the *polis*. The material culture connected to such collective cultural manifestations includes, *inter alia*, terracottas, such as anthropomorphic statuettes, votives representing animals or fruits, probably conceived as the non-perishable representations of victims and fruits offered during sacrifices; actual vessels and miniaturistic ones.

As already mentioned, the rituals could involve the community as a whole, or, more frequently, envisage a process of inclusion/exclusion which resulted, in some cases, in the involvement of only a portion of the whole community of the worshippers (in a society made up almost entirely of worshippers). Participation in the rite could, for instance, be limited

only certain categories of people (according to their age, gender, social group and so on). In this way, an extended number of people, united by homogeneous characters with respect to the gender, the phase of life, the status, the job position and so on, could participate together in collective actions. For example, the rites in the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, connected to the veneration of Iphigenia, were carried out by women who had not yet reached the marriage maturity.

Also for the community, the religious performance and the dedication of gifts do not exhaust the plurality of occasions of interactions between mortals and gods, connected to not-religious motivations as well.

The socio-political function of the sanctuary is well exemplified, *inter alia*, by the oracular consultation. Communities could ask gods questions or suggestions in oracular sanctuaries (such as that of Apollo at Delphi or Zeus at Nemea), to solve problems that were not exclusively religious in nature, but that were also connected to political and economic issues, such as the foundation of colonies, commercial and military expeditions and so on.

For instance, an epigraph found at the oracular sanctuary of Dodona, in Epirus, dating back to the IV-III century B.C., shows a *polis* or a *koinon* asking Zeus *Naios* and Dion how to use a certain amount of public money.⁴⁸ Besides, oracular sanctuaries were systematically consulted by Athens, Sparta, Corinth and even by Persian kings⁴⁹ during the Greek-Persian conflict, to take strategic decisions, to convince the assembly to take specific directions, to justify initiatives in the war context and so on.⁵⁰

Especially during the Archaic and Classical Age, the sanctuary is not merely a *locus religiosus*, but it is also a key-factor for the establishment of the collective identity, a center of social aggregation, a place where collective funds are preserved and also spent for the construction of monumental buildings that represent the *polis*; in some cases the sanctuary can also act as a public archive, by virtue of the multiple functions performed in the name and on behalf of the community.

The sanctuary, moreover, could act as the authority ensuring the correctness of the laws and of their interpretation. That is why the *polis* could decide to expose the documents of public interest, with legal value, inside the *temens*: For example, the list of Athenian archons was, according

⁴⁸ Lhôte, É. *Les lamelles oraculaires de Dodone*, Genève 2006; Parker, R. Seeking Advice from Zeus at Dodona, *G&R* 63 (2016); Antonello, S. and Equestri, M. Laminetta oracolare da Dodona: una consultazione pubblica, *Axon* 2/1 (2018), pp. 99-106.

⁴⁹ Robert, L. Le Carien Mys et l'Oracle du Ptoon, *Hellenica* 8 (1959), pp. 23-38.

⁵⁰ Giuliani, A. *La città e l'oracolo. I rapporti tra Atene e Delfi in età arcaica e classica*, Milano 2001.

to F. Jacoby, preserved in a sacred space.⁵¹ Furthermore, Aristotles states that the President of the Pritans had the custody of the public seal and of the keys of the sanctuaries, in which «the public funds and documents are preserved».⁵²

Perhaps, one of the primary reasons why the urban society interacted with the sanctuary can ultimately be traced back to the economic role played by the main sanctuaries of Greece.⁵³

⁵¹ Jacoby, A. *Atthis. The local chronicles of ancient Athens*, Oxford 1949; pp. 36, 78.

⁵² Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 44, 1.

⁵³ On the economic role of the Greek sanctuaries: Sassu (2014); Suk Fong Jim, T. *Sharing with the Gods: Aparchai and Dekatai in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 2014; Papazarkadas, N (2011); Pafford, I. *Cult Fees and the Ritual of Money in Greek Sanctuaries of the Classical and Hellenistic Period*, Berkeley 2006; Block, J. *Deme accounts and the meaning of hosios money*, *Mnemosyne* 63 (2010), pp. 61-93.

Bogaert, R. De Bankzaken van de Griekse Tempels. in *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taalen Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*. 18, 1964; Chankowski (2010; 2005; 2001); Picard, O. Les chremata d'Apollon et les débuts de la monnaie à Delphes, *Topoi* 12/13 (2005); Maucourant, J. *À propos de l'économie des sanctuaires de l'antiquité*, *Topoi* 12/13 (2005); Moroo, A. The Parthenon Inventories and Literate Aspects of the Athenian Society in the Fifth Century B.C., in International Symposium on Ancient Mediterranean World, *Proceedings of the International Symposium World held on 16th-18th April 2004 at University of Tokyo*, Tokyo 2004; Dignas A. Inventories' or 'Offering Lists'? Assessing the Wealth of Apollo Didymaeus, *ZPE* 138 (1998), pp. 235-244; id. *Economy of the sacred in the Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, Oxford 2003; Shaya, J. *The Lindos Stele and the Lost Treasures of Athena: Catalogs, Collections and Local History*, Ph.D. diss. Michigan Univ. 2002; Meadows, A. and Shipton K. (Ed.), *Money and its Uses in the Ancient Greek World*, Oxford 2001; Hamilton, R. *Treasure Map: A Guide to the Delian Inventories*, Ann Arbor 2000; Samons, J. *Empire of the owl: Athenian Imperial Finance*, Stuttgart 2000; Sickinger, J. *Public records and archives in classical Athens*, Chapel Hill 1999; Sinn, U. The influence of Greek sanctuaries on the consolidation of economic power, in Hellström, P. and Alroth, B. (Eds.), *Religion and power in the ancient Greek world, Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1993* (Boreas 24), Uppsala 1996; Harris, D. Gold and Silver on the Athenian Acropolis: Thucydides 2.13.4 and the Inventory Lists. *Horos* 8-9 (1990-1991); id. Freedom of information and accountability: The Inventory lists of the Parthenon. in Osborne, R. and Hornblower, S. (Eds.) *Ritual, Finance, Politics*, Oxford 1994, pp. 213-225; id. *The Treasures of the Parthenon and the Erechteion*, Oxford 1995.; Linders (1972; 1975; 1987; 1992, pp. 119-122); Giovannini, A. Le Parthénon, le Trésor d'Athéna e le Tribut des Alliés, *Historia* 39 (1990); Vickers, M. Golden Greece. Relative values, minae, and temple inventories, *AJA* 94 (1990); Koepfler, D. *Comptes et inventaires dans la cite grecque*, Neuchâtel-Genève 1988; Costabile, F. Finanze pubbliche. L'amministrazione finanziaria templare, in *Magna Grecia. Lo sviluppo politico, sociale ed economico*, Milano 1987; Lewis, D. Temple inventories in ancient Greece, in *Pots and pans. A colloquium on precious metals and ceramics in the Muslim, Chinese and Graeco-Roman worlds*, Oxford 1985; Clinton, K. Eleusinian treasures in the late fifth and early fourth centuries, in *Studies*

In fact, in most cases, the main poliadic sanctuary of the city acted as the State treasure, within a system that did not foresee an analogous secular institution. Hence, the designation of a cult representing the whole community, besides having a crucial social relevance, was also distinguished by an economic function connected to its acknowledged position in the definition of the collective identity.

Sanctuaries' impact on ancient Greek economy was indeed vast, as they lastly influenced the entire organization of public funds, thus becoming essential constituents of the *poleis'* financial life, at least up to the IV century B.C., when the new political scenario brought about the creation of separated sacred and civic assets. Particularly, it should be acknowledged that, in the Archaic and Classical Age, the sacred space held a primary role in the development of an economic strategy aimed at collecting and accumulating funds, to be used not only for religious purposes but also to cover public expenses.

From an economic standpoint, the sanctuary should not be regarded as a 'passive system', functioning merely thanks to the external resources provided by the *polis*. Conversely, it was indeed able, in many cases, to self-finance its own expenses, to autonomously generate income, to accumulate

presented to Sterling Dow on his eightieth birthday, Durham 1984; Jameson (1982); Debord, P. Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l'Anatolie gréco-romaine, *EPRO* 88 (1982); Musti, D. Strutture cittadine e funzione del santuario, in *Le tavole di Locri*, Atti del colloquio sugli aspetti politici, economici, culturali e linguistici dei testi dell'archivio locrese, Napoli 26-27 aprile 1977, Rome 1979; Tréheux, J. Etudes sur les inventaires attiques, in *Etudes d'archéologie classique* 3, Paris 1965; Meritt, B.D. and Wade-Jery, H.T. and McGregor, M.C. *Athenian Tribute Lists*, I-IV, 1939-1952; Oliver, J. Sacred gerousia, *Hesperia Suppl.* 6 (1941); Oikonomos, G. *Naopoioi kai Essenēs*, Athina 1924; Ferguson, W. *The treasurers of Athena*, Harvard 1932; Homolle, T. Comptes des Hiéropes du Temple d'Apollon Délien, *BCH* 6 (1882).

⁵³ Significantly, the B-side of the Kallias Decrees (*IG* I³ 52), significantly declares that no amount exceeding 10.000 drachmas can be taken from the treasure of Athena without the authorization of the *demos* (side B, lines 14-16). The document makes it clear that public assets were, at a certain extent, not separated from divine ones, that could be managed by public officers in the interest of the city. The authorization to use divine properties had to be granted by public assemblies also in the cities of Myrrhinus, Delos, Amorgos, Ios, Kos, Lindos, Ephesus, Priene, Olymos. Moreover, the recording and measurement of the *hiera chremata* had to be carried out under the supervision of the *polis'* authorities: the Kallias Decrees clearly indicates that the process involved the prytans, the *logistai* and the *Boule*; particularly, the weighting and inventorying had to be done in front of the latter. Similarly, the divine treasure at Delos, could be accessed only with the presence of the archon and of the prytans and, in some cases, of the Council. In addition, at Kos, the treasurers were controlled by the *prostates*.

capital, to employ permanent staff along with fixed-term contractors, to attract traders, sellers and, henceforth, to foster production and money circulation.

From the post-Geometric period until the late Classical Age, the Greek sanctuary acted as the main responsible for the management of communal financial resources. Hoarded assets, formally owned by the deity, were actually administered by the collective body - exactly because a clear dividing line between public and sacred properties was not traced - as can be elicited by literary and epigraphic sources.

In fact, Greek sanctuaries hoarded huge amounts of money and especially of valuable objects, that were preserved inside the temples in order to physically immobilize the circulating gold, silver and copper, with the aim of establishing a permanent deposit for the sacred area and, in some measure, for the whole urban community.

Consistent resources flowed to temples from both religious and 'profane' sources, via donation and dedication by individuals (worshippers, athletes, artisans, tyrants, kings etc.) or entire city-states and collective bodies (such as demes, sub-units of poleis, priests' or magistrates' colleges); funds offered in the occasion of the accomplishments of passage rites; fees from participants in rituals; they could also come from rents in kind or in coin deriving from land ownership; from sacred real estate lease; from owned animal flocks; from the sale of sacrifices' remains; tithes on products; levies and taxes on trade, on arbors, on freed slaves; percentages calculated over income, the *aparche*, the *dekate*; fines; confiscations, war booties, banking activities such as loans with interest or money exchange and so on.

Sanctuaries funds can be employed for ordinary expenses related to the sanctuary management that could include, for example, temples or other sacred structures' erection or restoration, sacrificial animals purchase, cult personnel payment, feasting implementation and ritual performance. In some circumstances, some funds might be left over and be used to generate income by means of financial operations such as investments or money lending. But collected funds could be also spent into public interventions, e.g. city monuments, infrastructures or defensive walls. In this connection, the erection of temples itself should be regarded as an action pursuing a redistribution of the common wealth, given the socio-political meaning of such edifices, high-visibility symbols of the *polis* for its citizens and for the external world. Finally, the resources could be stored as a permanent deposit for the social body of the urban settlement, to be used to meet its needs in critical moments. Such extraordinary expenses

could concern, for instance, public architectural constructions, financial support for the orphans and widows of war as well as for the public magistrates or, more often, for armed conflicts.

During hard financial circumstances, it was the main sanctuary of the *polis*, although formally as a loan, to provide the funds required to afford the most consistent expenses, both by handing over money and, especially, by melting precious items made out of expensive metals, as it happened throughout the Peloponnesian wars, during which the debt towards the Acropolis sanctuary reached the exceptional amount of 5.600 talents (IG I³ 369).

In conclusion, the relationship between the human group and the divine space was extremely complex, intertwining social requirements, aimed at promoting the collective identity of the society and ensuring its continuity over time, political needs and above all economic ones. The final picture offers multiple levels of reading, in which religion and collective life intersect and overlap.

Concluding remarks

Attempts to globally analyze a sanctuary, considering it as a holistic and integrated system of religion, society, politics and economy, have been carried out occasionally, resulting more in sporadic reflections than in overall discussions on the topic. Instead, it should be stressed that the *temenos* is made up of different elements that are functionally connected with a view of fulfilling the collective and individual rituals, the establishment of a common shared identity, the creation of a public economy, of spread of a shared behavioral system and of a unitary legislation. Only by paying the proper attention to the human motivations for attending rituals, interacting with the gods and entering the sacred space, the sanctuary overall physiognomy acquires meaning, consequentiality and organicity.

The sacred space, designed by the men for the gods, should be regarded as a mosaic composed by tiles linked by relations of subordination and complementarity, consisting in monumental buildings, structures of lesser visible impact, closed and open areas. These spaces are intended to facilitate the experience of the divine but also to satisfy the most material needs of earthly existence.

The short remarks aim to contribute to the understanding of the functions and of the meanings of the sacred spaces, by stressing the relevance of anthropological actions in divine spaces.

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