

BOOK REVIEW

Πλειών. *Papers in memory of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood*. Ariadne Supplement 1. Edited by ATHENA KAVOULAKI. Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 2018. Pp. xvii + 390. Paperback, € 26.00. ISBN: 978–618–82229–1–5.

Πλειών: *Papers in Memory of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood*, edited by Athena Kavoulaki, is the first supplementary volume published at *Ariadne* in University of Crete and includes the proceedings of a conference held at Rethymnon in 2012 to commemorate a great Hellenist, the late Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood; that scholar was distinguished for her ability to bring together different approaches to literature, history, archaeology and the visual arts in a highly sophisticated and theoretically informed way. Like the spectrum of material studied by Sourvinou-Inwood, the papers collected to celebrate her memory display a wide variety of subjects and breadth of approaches. The volume opens with an introduction by the editor (followed by a list of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood's published works) and continues with eleven essays which are representative of Sourvinou-Inwood's engagement with key issues in the fields of myth and ritual, of religious institutions and structures, of poetic texts and contexts, of funerary dedications and of monuments and artifacts.

The opening chapter "Delphi, Primeval Purification and *Theoria*: In Search of a Schema" (21-31) by Ian Rutherford examines the term *Theoroi*, who were delegates sent by cities to sanctuaries and festivals to attend, view and spectate on behalf of the city. Rutherford stresses that the above fact is a primary sign that a community is autonomous, just as being able to attract delegates from elsewhere, such as imperial Athens did in the 5th century. Subsequently, *Theoria* played a key role in "*polis* religion," and in fact it was the main religious mechanism through which the *polis* connected with the rest of the world. Then, Rutherford cites the limited evidence that attest rituals relating to the departure of *Theoroi* (people in Rhegium, the Delphic festival known as the *Septerion*, Cretan links with Delphi, 21-28). Finally, Rutherford identified a ritual schema in which the movement of sacred delegates between a Greek city and Delphi is coordinated with a myth about a primeval purification of Apollo or Orestes which is supposed to have

happened in the city, and in which the sending off of the delegates from the city takes place in the context of a ritual or myth commemorating the purification (28).

The following chapter, “Caria and Polis Religion” (33-57) by Robert Parker, examines a place of Caria within a comparative typology of forms of religious organization, because this region probably provides useful examples of organizing bodies other than the *polis* (33). Strabo’s account of the Chrysaoric league has sometimes been taken as a model for trying to imagine a pre-*polis* form of religious and political organization. Parker explains that the most dramatic evidence for the role of *poleis* in Caria as early as the 4th century comes from two inscriptions dated to the satrapy of Mausolus and are probably “pierres errantes” from Mylasa (37-52). Parker observes that we are dealing with a sanctuary – centered community which is not a *polis*, though it may eventually be absorbed into one. Such sanctuary – centered communities are perhaps the most distinctive Carian element to be taken up within the continuous process of bricolage that created the Carian religious world which we very partially observe (54).

The next contribution, “Was ‘Polis Religion’ ‘Economically Rational’? The Case of Oropos” (59-84) by John Davies, uses a single, well-documented case-study in order to explore how effectively a Greek political community managed its revenue – bearing cultic assets, and within what framework of practicality and *mentalites*. The justification for doing so stems from the pervasiveness in Greek polytheistic antiquity of the system that has been labelled “polis-religion,” i.e. a structure which had come to incorporate most of the cults, sacrifices, sanctuaries and festivals of most the deities which were recognized as having a place within the geographical circumscription of a specific city-state (60-61). The case-study focuses on the sanctuary of the iatromantic, hero-turned god Amphiaraus in the territory of Oropos to the north of Athens. Davies concludes that neither formulation does justice to the values of “polis religion” or of the needs and desires of the men and women whose behavior as participants is being assessed (79).

The following chapter, “The Athenian *Exegetai*” (85-96) by Sally Humphreys, explores the Athenian *exegetai* that were not – until the Hellenistic period – elected office-holders. Humphreys starts by examining the ‘filters’ through which the evidence has been read. These “filters” were derived from a combination of cultural ambiance and disciplinary training (85). Although the *exegetes*’ display of erudition was not parodied in comedy, a convincing performance would presumably call for what we might call antiquarian knowledge. In this sense, there would

indeed be a relation between exegesis and historiography (not in the form imagined by Wilamowitz) and Pausanias very commonly calls his local informants *exegetai*; they will have been local antiquarians (94). Thus, Humphreys proposes to increase the number of Attic *exegetai*, rather than reduce it, in her attempt to understand Greek religious thought as an on-going contribution to classical intellectual activity (94-95).

Chapter 5, “The Theatres and Dionysia of Attica” (97-144) by Peter Wilson, describes the dramatic festivals of Dionysus held by the demes of Attica, slowly emerging from an extended period of neglect. Wilson examines the evidence for theatre in a number of Attic demes within the context of a recent debate about the distribution of theatres across the demes of Attica. In many cases, the existence of a theatre or festival of Dionysus in a deme turns upon the interpretation of a small number or even a single item of evidence, so close and careful attention to each case is essential in order to reach a sound judgement as to the attested distribution of theatres across Attica (98). Wilson analyzes 22 demes for which there is evidence for a local Dionysia with some form of theatrical performance in the Classical period (100).

Chapter 6, “Pindar’s Sixth *Paean*: Conceptualizing Religious Panhellenism” (145-177) by Agis Marinis, draws special attention to the Panhellenic dimension of Greek religion, an issue of which Sourvinou-Inwood acknowledged the importance but did not expatiate on due to the specific focus of her work. Marinis claims that Pindar’s lyric offers a distinct opportunity to explore “Panhellenic religion” in its literary enactment through publicly performed verse, but also with the polis as an inevitable point of reference. The present chapter aims to trace the way in which an expanded (“Panhellenic”) geographical horizon is accommodated within Pindaric religious discourse, not least through the deployment of various modalities of prayer (146-47). In *Paean* 6 the “Panhellenic” community, while not being “created” *in situ*, is still implicitly projected through the conceptual integration of geographically disparate loci of worship. Marinis concludes that the interest in Pindaric poetry, in terms of panhellenism, lies in this: “it deploys in the public arena a “Panhellenic” poetic discourse, which, by being independent of any institutional norms, is capable of shaping norms, even antagonistically to influential models, as we have remarked with regard to *Paean* 6” (171).

The following contribution, “Euripides, *Hippolytus* 832-833 and 1379-1383: Theology, Religious Exploration, and Unknowability” (179-193) by Renaud Gagne, offers the profound insights that Sourvinou-Inwood developed on the

creative stagings of unknowability by Euripides, which can continue to inspire investigations of “tragic religion” beyond the now frequent and often overdone criticisms of the polis religion model. In this short paper, Gagne illustrates that point with one example from one tragedy, Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, which played such a significant role in Tragedy and Athenian Religion and Inwood’s other work on tragedy (182). In two passages of the *Hippolytus* (832-833, 1379-1383), Theseus and Hippolytus successively attempt to explain their misfortune by reference to the idea of ancestral fault. The two characters are wrong, obviously, and the common error of both their understanding of divine causation stands out as a statement about their inability to make sense of the forces at work in their downfall (183). Gagne concludes that because of the familiarity of the concept of ancestral fault, both as a recurrent theme in the tragic genre, these lines directly challenge the immediate knowledge of the audience, and force each spectator to position himself in relation to the distinctive (and wrong) claims to knowledge made by Theseus and Hippolytus (192).

Chapter 8, “Sacred Time in Theocritus’ Hymn of Adonis (*Idyll 15*)” (195-220) by John Petropoulos, seeks to establish that the unnamed singer of a hymn of Adonis in Theocritus’ *Idyll 15* saw the divine events she described for the reason that she experienced them in the dimension of sacred time. Petropoulos claims that the singer’s experience is inscribed in, and at the same time constructed by, the text of the song; thus, it is necessary to focus on the relevant passages first and then proceed to further analysis. Petropoulos concludes that Theocritus’ focus here is on the present and on the god’s very presence, both of which are conditioned by the (mythic) past. The interlacing of past and present in this purported cult song can also be matched in Orthodox Christian worship, where we note the paradoxical coincidence of the past and present; in Theocritus’ hymn the word *today* “embodies a specific spiritual experience,” that of a condensed time, and arguably the description of the divine here presupposes a similar experience of sacred time – a subjective experience of the past as extending into the present (214-15).

The following chapter, “Tragedy, Greek Religion, and Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*” (221-228) by Michael Anderson, examines the fact that, despite the loss of culture-specific details and nuances, modern adaptations can recreate a spiritual ethos akin to that of Greek tragedy, and like their ancient predecessors, they serve as a vehicle for examining the nature of humanity vis-à-vis the divine and exploring the role of the sacred in human experience (221). Anderson argues that Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* goes further than most in bringing the religious dimension

to the foreground and creating a sacred atmosphere that accords with the spirit of the original. In this adaptation, Stravinsky “carefully manipulates the drama, the spectacle, and the music to recapture the Sophoclean collision between mortal and divine, highlighting the confusion and suffering of the mortals against a background of divine inscrutability, all within a sacred, ritualistic context that honors both the human sufferers and the unknowable divine forces” (228).

Chapter 10, “God of Many Names: Dionysus in the Light of his Cult Epithets” (229-288) by Anton Bierl, explores the direct and strong invocation of Dionysus as “god of many names” (πολυώνυμε *S. Ant.* 1115). Bierl argues that Dionysus is the first Classical god to be characterized as *heis* (εἷς “one”), to assume, thus, henothestic traits (235). A certain picture does seem to emerge, according to which Dionysus turns out to be a creative, multi-faceted and transgressive god, full of energy and vitality who – notoriously - resists clear - cut and simple definitions. Bierl concludes that Dionysus is the emblem and personification of exuberant energy and manic performance, which, because of the lack of signification, remains enigmatic and meets with resistance. Those who do understand the ecstatic expressions can abandon themselves and merge in their worship with the god and thus become his initiates. For them the inarticulate cries can transform into poetry and the entire frenzy into ‘deeper’ religion, a religion which would soon lay its own claims (245).

The concluding Chapter 11, “Greek Inscribed Discs: Athletes, Dedications, and Tombstones” (289-331) by Mika Kajava and Elina Salminen, examines a number of inscribed disc-shaped artefacts and, more particularly, round objects which, in one way or another, may be associated with athletes: dedications to deities, commemorative objects belonging to athletic funerary monuments, or just works of art somehow inspired by the athletic world and appearing in funerary contexts or elsewhere. Kajava and Salminen argue that most of the evidence is datable from the late Archaic to the early Classical period and may come not only from Attica but from many parts of the Greek world. The relevant material of athletic discs is listed for convenience in the following two-part Catalogue. The order is geographical, as in the *SEG*, with a typological organization for the Athenian material, while the subsequent discussion partly proceeds thematically. Finally, references to photographs or drawings are at the end of the entries and the evidence presented, although not complete, affords a substantial overview that allows drawing some reliable conclusions (298).

The volume concludes with an excursus, which contains a short piece by Michael Inwood, and an appendix in which a collection of Sourvinou's youthful poems is published for the first time. In this way the volume pays tribute to the memory of a great classical scholar both by shedding light on an unknown side of her personality and, above all, by advancing the intellectual discourse that Sourvinou-Inwood's work shaped and nourished in significant ways. Overall, this is a very promising supplementary volume commemorating Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood and embraces archaeological and literary evidence of "religion polis" in Classical Greece by scholars who knew and valued Inwood's scientific research. I totally recommend this book for scholars and non-academics who are interested in exploring many religious aspects of the Archaic and Classical Greece, and who further seek to learn about Inwood's academic personality.

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