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John Pedley

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SANCTUARIES AND THE SACRED IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD

This book explores the variety of ancient Greek sanctuaries – their settings, spaces, shapes, and structures – and the rituals associated with them, such as festivals and processions, sacrifice and libation, dining and drinking, prayer and offering, dance, initiation, consultation, and purification. The first chapters outline the important themes and issues, including locations and their meanings, defining features of sanctuaries, the relationship between structure and ritual, political as well as religious functions, transformations over time, and the activities and experiences of the individual. These themes are then linked to historic and specific sanctuaries, notably Olympia and Delphi, as examples of major international sanctuaries; Samos and Poseidonia, as urban sanctuaries in different parts of the Greek world; and the Acropolis in Athens. Final chapters trace the consequences of the Roman conquest, the spread of Christianity, and the impact of Turks, travelers, archaeologists, and tourists on these sites. Written in a clear style and richly illustrated, the book is intended for students and provides an accessible yet authoritative introduction to the material aspects of ancient Greek sanctuaries and the ritual activities that took place there. It includes a lengthy glossary and a chapter bibliography.

John Pedley is Professor of Classical Archaeology and Greek, Emeritus, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the author of numerous articles and books, among them *Greek Art and Archaeology*, now in its third edition. Former director of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, he has received fellowships and grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Philosophical Society.

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JOHN PEDLEY
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*To the memory of
Jeanne and Louis Robert*

CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
I Introduction	1
1 Themes	2
2 Sanctuary Histories	14
3 Cultural Differences	15
II Setting the Stage	17
1 The Greek Gods	17
2 Time and Place	22
3 The Evidence	25
4 Social Organization: Family and Polis	27
III Growth and Variety	29
1 Sacred Space	29
2 Development	29
3 Hero Cults	34
4 Smaller Sanctuaries	35
IV The Siting of Sanctuaries	39
1 Sanctuaries in Nature	39
2 Interurban Sanctuaries	40
3 Urban Sanctuaries	42
4 Suburban Sanctuaries	42
5 Extraurban Sanctuaries	46
6 Rural Sanctuaries	51

7	Current Debates: Sanctuary Placement and the Formation of the Polis	52
V	Architecture for the Gods: Sacred Building	57
1	Temenos Walls	57
2	Propyla: Gateways	58
3	Altars	60
4	Temples	62
5	The Parthenon	68
6	Other Buildings	74
VI	Activities and Experiences, I: Rites and Rituals	78
1	Festivals	78
2	Sacrifice	80
3	Dance	82
4	Dining and Drinking	84
5	The Thesmophoria	87
6	Getting in Touch	88
7	Initiation	92
8	Asylum, Purification, Healing	97
VII	Activities and Experiences, II: Offerings	100
1	Cult Statues	100
2	Personal Offerings: Eighth and Seventh Centuries	101
3	Personal Offerings: Sixth Century	106
4	Personal Offerings: Fifth and Fourth Centuries	110
5	Temple Inventories	114
6	State Offerings	115
7	Verbal Offerings: Prayers, Hymns, Songs	116
VIII	Sanctuary Histories: Olympia	119
1	Location and Character	119
2	The Early Years	120
3	Building, Decorating, Dedicating, and Competing	122
4	The Olympic Games	131
IX	Sanctuary Histories: Delphi	135
1	Location and Character	135
2	The Early Years	136
3	Enlarging and Enhancing the Sanctuary	138
4	The Oracle	151
5	The Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia	151

Contents



X Sanctuary Histories: Samos	154
1 Location and Character	154
2 The Early Years	156
3 From Makeshift to Majestic	157
4 New Perspectives	164
XI Sanctuary Histories: Poseidonia	167
1 Location and Character	167
2 The Early Years	168
3 Building and Dedicating: The Urban Sanctuary of Hera	170
4 Sanctuaries in the Countryside	175
5 The Suburban Sanctuary at Santa Venera	184
XII Sanctuary Histories: The Acropolis at Athens	186
1 Location and Character	186
2 The Eighth- and Seventh-Century Acropolis	187
3 The Archaic Sanctuary	188
4 The Classical Acropolis	190
5 The Panathenaia	202
XIII Greece, Rome, and Byzantium	205
1 Romans in Greece	205
2 The Spread of Christianity	207
3 Olympia and Delphi	210
4 Athens	214
5 Samos and Poseidonia	220
XIV The Aftermath	225
1 Christians and Turks	225
2 Travelers and Architects	230
3 Archaeologists and Tourists	234
<i>Glossary</i>	241
<i>Bibliography</i>	247
<i>Index</i>	255

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Map of the Greek world	2
2. Map of Greece and the Aegean	3
3. Map of southern Italy and Sicily	4
4. Map of Attica	5
5. Aerial view of the Sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia	6
6. Scene of sacrifice on an Attic krater (Naples 127929)	7
7. Aerial view of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi	9
8. Water carriers, North Frieze of the Parthenon	13
9. Bronze statuette of Zeus (Berlin Museum)	18
10. Silver coin of Poseidonia	19
11. Bronze statue of Athena (Peiraieus Museum)	20
12. Terra-cotta figurine of Hera Kourotrophos (Paestum Museum)	21
13. Terra-cotta figurine of Hera Hippiia (Paestum Museum)	21
14. Terra-cotta figurine of Hera Hoplosmia (or Athena Promachos) (Paestum Museum)	21
15. Plan of the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros	33
16. View of the Acropolis, Athens, from the southwest	36
17. Plan of the Acropolis slopes, Athens	36
18. View of the Agora, Athens, from the southeast	37
19. Plan of the Agora, Athens	37
20. Bronze helmet (British Museum GR 1928.6-10.1)	41
21. Map of Poseidonia and territory	43
22. Plan of Athens	44
23. Plan of Cyrene	45
24. <i>Perirrhanterion</i> from Isthmia (drawing)	49
25. Plan of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, Eleusis	59



26. Plan of the Sanctuary of Artemis, Brauron	60
27. Plan of settlement and Sanctuary of Poseidon at Sounion	61
28. Great Altar of Pergamon (Berlin)	63
29. Plan of a typical Greek temple	64
30. Columns, capitals, and bases of the Temple of Athena, Smyrna (drawing of reconstruction)	65
31. Interior, fourth Temple of Dionysos, Yria (drawing of reconstruction)	67
32. Greek architectural orders: column capitals (drawing)	67
33. The Parthenon, Athens, from the northwest	68
34. Plan of the Parthenon	69
35. The Parthenon, Athens, West Frieze in situ	70
36. The Parthenon Frieze (diagram)	71
37. The Parthenon, Athens, East Frieze: peplos incident	71
38. The Parthenon, Athens, North Frieze: riders	72
39. The Parthenon, Athens, East Frieze: female figures	73
40. The Parthenon, Athens, East Frieze: seated deities	73
41. Procession to an altar (Athens NM 16464)	81
42. Statue base with pyrrhic dancers (Acropolis Museum, Athens, 1338)	83
43. Plan of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, Corinth	86
44. Typical cooking pots (Corinth Museum)	87
45. Terra-cotta offering trays (Corinth Museum)	87
46. Terra-cotta figurine of a young woman (Corinth Museum)	87
47. Iamos, from the east pediment, Temple of Zeus, Olympia	91
48. Allotment machine (reconstruction drawing)	93
49. Votive pots showing girls dancing (Brauron Museum)	97
50. Bronze statuettes from Dreros (Heraklion Museum 2445–7)	102
51. Bronze warrior from Olympia (Olympia Museum)	103
52. Bronze charioteer from Olympia (Olympia Museum)	103
53. Bronze statuette said to be from Thebes (Boston Museum of Fine Arts 03.997)	103
54. Kore dedicated by Nikandre, from Delos (Athens NM 1)	105
55. Kouros (Metropolitan Museum of Art New York 32.11.1)	109
56. Anavysos kouros (Athens NM 3851)	109
57. Angelitos' Athena (Acropolis Museum, Athens, 140)	111
58. Aphrodite and Hermes on a terra-cotta relief plaque from Locri (Taranto Museum)	112
59. Hades and Persephone on a terra-cotta relief plaque from Locri (Reggio Museum 21016; drawing)	113

Illustrations



60. Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos (Roman version)	117
61. Bronze statuette of a horse (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 21.88.24)	121
62. Bronze tripod cauldron (Olympia Museum, reconstruction)	122
63. Olympia, so-called Temple of Hera, view from the east	123
64. Plan of the Sanctuary of Zeus, Olympia	124
65. Temple of Zeus, Olympia, east pediment (drawing)	125
66. Temple of Zeus, Olympia, west pediment (drawing)	125
67. Temple of Zeus, Olympia, Herakles metope	126
68. Temple of Zeus, Olympia, cross section and Zeus statue (drawing)	127
69. Nike of Paionios (Olympia Museum 46-48)	130
70. Hermes and Dionysos (Olympia Museum)	131
71. Plan of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi	137
72. Aerial view of the Sanctuary of Apollo, Delphi	141
73. Treasury of the Siphnians, Delphi (drawing)	142
74. Treasury of the Siphnians, east frieze, Delphi	143
75. Treasury of the Athenians, Delphi, view from the east	144
76. Stoa of the Athenians, Delphi (drawing)	145
77. Twin kouroi (Delphi Museum nos. 1524, 467)	147
78. Sphinx of the Naxians (Delphi Museum)	148
79. Bronze charioteer (Delphi Museum)	149
80. Delphi, Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, view from the east	152
81. Delphi, Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, restored tholos	153
82. North Syrian bronze horse trapping (Samos Museum)	155
83. Plan of the Sanctuary of Hera, Samos, 7th c. BC	158
84. Plan of the Sanctuary of Hera, Samos, 6th c. BC	159
85. Samos, the Sanctuary of Hera, 6th c. BC altar (drawings)	161
86. Kouros dedicated by Isches (Samos Museum)	163
87. Kore, so-called Hera of Samos (Louvre)	163
88. Family statuary group by Geneleos (Samos Museum)	164
89. Wood objects (model boats?) (Samos Museum)	165
90. Map of Poseidonia and environs	169
91. Poseidonia, Temple of Hera I, from the southwest	171
92. Poseidonia, Temple of Hera I, plan	171
93. Poseidonia, Temple of Hera II, from the southwest	173
94. Inscribed silver disk (Paestum Museum)	174
95. Terra-cotta figurine of Hera (Paestum Museum)	175
96. Plan of the Sanctuary of Hera at Foce del Sele	177
97. Metope from Foce del Sele: Herakles (Paestum Museum)	178
98. Metope from Foce del Sele: Ajax (Paestum Museum)	178



99. Metope from Foce del Sele: young women (Paestum Museum)	179
100. Plan of the Sanctuary of Demeter at Albanella	183
101. “Bluebeard” pediment (Acropolis Museum, Athens)	188
102. Kore (Acropolis Museum, Athens, 682)	189
103. “Mourning Athena” relief (Acropolis Museum, Athens, 695)	192
104. Blond Boy (Acropolis Museum, Athens, 689)	193
105. Kritios Boy (Acropolis Museum, Athens, 698)	194
106. Plan of the Acropolis, Athens	195
107. Propylaia, Athenian Acropolis, view from the southwest	197
108. Plan of the Propylaia	197
109. Temple of Athena Nike, Athenian Acropolis, view from the east	198
110. Erechtheion, Athenian Acropolis, South Porch	199
111. Plan of the Erechtheion, Athenian Acropolis	199
112. Panathenaic amphora (British Museum)	203
113. Plan of the Sanctuary of Asklepios, Acropolis, South Slope	208
114. Plan of the Erechtheion converted to a church	209
115. Tanagra figurine	214
116. Defeated enemies of Athens, Pergamon, and the gods (Naples Museum)	215
117. Attalid monument at northeast corner of the Parthenon (drawing)	216
118. Caryatids from the Forum of Augustus	217
119. Sabina inscription, Sanctuary of Venus, Paestum (Paestum Museum)	222
120. Terra-cotta swaddled infant (Paestum Museum)	223
121. Plan of the Christian Parthenon	226
122. Propylaia converted to a Frankish palace, reconstruction (drawing)	227
123. The Turkish Parthenon	228
124. Venetian bombardment of the Turkish Parthenon	229
125. Parthenon, south metope 1	231
126. View of Poseidonia (18th c. engraving)	233

PREFACE

This book has been planned for use by students and other interested people who have no previous acquaintance with the ancient Greek world. In this I have followed the guidelines of Cambridge University Press. So it is an introduction, an initial reference point from which students, at college or otherwise, can move to more detailed and scholarly studies. It is aimed at anyone interested in learning more about the life of the ancient Greeks, and especially at undergraduates in beginning courses and at advanced high-school students. I hope they will find here the basic information with which to begin to recognize underlying themes and continuing questions, and to understand something of the workings of Greek sanctuaries and their place in ancient Greek society.

The emphasis is on what the sanctuaries looked like, and what it would have been like for the visitor in antiquity when he or she went to a sanctuary. So a good deal of the focus is on experiences visitors might have had, on activities that took place, and on changes that happened to and in the sanctuaries over time – in other words, the physical and natural world of the sanctuaries and the ritual activities in which Greek priests, priestesses, citizens, and others participated.

Mistakes of approach or emphasis, or misreadings of evidence are entirely my own. If the book appears “undertheorized,” so be it. In spite of the death of certainty, the frailty and biased quality of all the evidence available, literary or archaeological, and the cultural predispositions of commentators (including myself), the purpose has been to put before the interested, though not necessarily classical, reader a range of themes



pertinent to Greek sanctuaries as a whole, as well as selected packets of evidence referring to particular sanctuaries. Readers may then bring to bear on these holy places and their attendant rituals their own intellectual angles and idiosyncracies.

It is, to state the obvious, impossible to deal with Greek sanctuaries without mentioning some aspects of Greek religion. However, I’ve steered clear of the philosophical and moral issues of this enormous topic and instead refer the interested reader to two elegant books: Simon Price’s *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge 1999; reprint 2002), and Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel’s *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge 1992; numerous reprints, most recently 2002), translated by Paul Cartledge.

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