as one of 'critical asceticism' based on traditional scholarship and semionarrative, at a moment in our discipline in which 'the polish of appearances and superficiality supports claims made for the sake of competition and immediate profit' (p. vii).

In many ways these two books are excellent examples of what can be gained by the combination of advanced methods and good old scholarship.

Although these translations are for the most part clear and readable, C.'s book has moments of occasional awkwardness, and the reader will wince at misplaced accents in transliterated Greek words. *Errata* and typos remain in both, some irritating, e.g. D., p. 174 n. 7: Aeschylus, *Helen*, 2 should read Gorgias, *Encomium to Helen,* 2.

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INTRODUCING GREEK RELIGION

J. D. MIKALSON: *Ancient Greek Religion*. Pp. xiv + 225, maps, ills. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Paper, £16.99, US$27.95 (Cased, £55, US$64.95). ISBN: 0-631-23223-0 (0-631-23222-2 hbk).

Jon Mikalson, with several previous books on aspects of Greek religion, is well placed to write a book entitled *Ancient Greek Religion*. In his Preface (p. xi) he sets out his aim to write a 'first introduction' to ancient Greek religion, dealing mainly but not exhaustively with the classical period, with his intention to have most of the focus on Athens. To overcome the sheer weight of topics involved, Mikalson has decided to deal with 'some basic concepts, . . . a select group of deities and cults, [and] religion as practiced [*sic*] in the context of the family, the village, and the city-state, and . . . the religious life of the individual . . .' (p. xi).

To this end, the book is divided into eight specific chapters. In the first chapter ('Overview: Greek Sanctuaries and Worship'; pp. 1–31), M. takes the example of the temple of Poseidon at Sounion (which he spells as Sunium) to describe a typical sanctuary, as a means of discussing the physical place of worship, its location, the altar, temenos, priests and priestesses, sacred days, dedications, statue, temple, and worship. By taking Poseidon's worship at Sounion as an example, he constructs for the reader an actual sanctuary and what took place there. Unfortunately, Sounion is not altogether a satisfactory example, as so little is known about so many aspects of the operation of this cult (as can be clearly seen in M.'s own account). M. would perhaps have been better off choosing a sanctuary about which there is substantial information with which to fill out his chosen categories.

In the second chapter, 'Greek Gods, Heroes, and Polytheism' (pp. 32–54), M. surveys the gods and heroes, ouranic and chthonic, and the nature of Greek polytheism. There is no discussion of each of the gods, but examples are given, such as Poseidon at Sounion for a god, and Theseus at Athens as a hero. The third chapter, 'Seven Greek Cult Myths' (pp. 55–67), takes seveal major myths, mainly from Athens, with about a page description of each. (Erechtheus is here identified with Erichthonios, but this is far from certain, p. 58.) M. describes the origins of the Athenians and the main deity Athena, as well as Poseidon, Dionysos, Artemis Brauronia, and

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Zeus Polieus, with the emphasis being on how myths underpinned ritual activity, especially that of the Athenian acropolis.

'Five Major Greek Cults' (pp. 68–132), the fourth chapter, looks at the cult of Athena Polieus, the Eleusinian Mysteries, Dionysos at Thebes, Apollo at Delphi, and Zeus at Olympia. Chapter Five, 'Religion in the Greek Family and Village' (pp. 133–159), discusses the religious rôles of family members: father, mother, daughter, son, and family slave. The gendered nature of much Greek religion but also its strong family orientation is made explicit. 'Religion of the Greek City-State' (pp. 160–80) as the sixth chapter deals with the rôle played by the gods in the polis, while the seventh chapter, 'Greek Religion and the Individual' (pp. 181–197), emphasizes the relationship between gods and the individual, with sections on impiety and the afterlife. The final chapter, 'Greek Religion in the Hellenistic Period' (pp. 198–219), does not quite belong in the book, given this chapter's emphasis of a particular period in history rather than the themes examined elsewhere by the rest of the book.

Throughout the work, M. attempts to bring the reader close to the ancient sources of Greek religion with short extracts from these throughout the text. Sometimes these are in shaded boxes and the contents of the source relate to the topic at hand. But the source itself is not always discussed by M., the idea apparently being that the student, having read, for example, the section on priests (p. 11), will understand the snippet from Plato's *Politicus* (an unfamiliar transliteration) 290c8–d2 that M. provides.

It is perhaps surprising that M. has not used his own translations of Greek literary works. In his translation (p. 52) of the sacrificial calendar of the Attic deme Erchia M. renders *ou phora* as 'not to be removed', whereas 'to be consumed on the spot' would be more appropriate to convey the intention of the prohibition (M. does not give bibliographic references for inscriptions: this is Sokolowski *LSCG* 18).

There is a carefully chosen range of illustrations which cover a variety of media and genres of religious iconography, from statues to vases, grave reliefs, and coins. The line drawings and models of temples and sanctuaries will no doubt enable the reader to visualize the architecture of Greek religion. My only negative comment here is that the illustrations often serve as a backdrop to the discussion rather than being integrated into it; some ideas as to how the reader is to utilize the iconography as a source of information could have been included.

In his Preface M. guides the reader to other books on Greek religion (p. xii), including Burkert's *Greek Religion*, and at the end of each chapter has a reasonably comprehensive reading list, broken down into specific headings, which will do more than provide the average reader with further resources on the material covered by that chapter. The index is brief but serviceable; the focus on Athens, however, means that there was no entry on Sparta or Corinth.

This is a book introducing Greek religion. It has various gaps, and does not deal with the religion of ancient Greece as a whole, emphasizing Athens with some sections on Olympia and Delphi. But the author makes it clear he is not attempting a coverage of all of Greek religion. It certainly could not be recommended for students starting out in the field as *the* introductory study, but would need to be read alongside other material. Within the confines of an introduction to the topic, M. has succeeded in his objective while avoiding the handbook/manual approach. This is a lucid and interesting account, and the text is very approachable.

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