Preface and Acknowledgements

This volume of essays is based on the papers given, and the resulting discussions, at a meeting of ancient historians held in September 2020, as part of the research process for the three-year, AHRC-funded, Virtual Reality Oracle project.[1] We are extremely grateful to all of those who took part in the workshop, both those whose papers are now part of this collection and those who contributed in other, valuable ways.

This workshop was held to inform the creation of the Virtual Reality Oracle (VRO), an imagining, in VR, of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona in NW Greece in the mid-fifth century BCE (specifically June 7th, 465 BCE). The project was originated, designed and led by Esther Eidinow, as primary investigator, with co-investigators Hugh Bowden (KCL), Kirsten Cater (Bristol), Michael Proulx (Bath) and Quinton Deeley (KCL); and research associates, Chris Bevan (Bristol), Richard Cole (Bristol), Crescent Jicol with Emilia Tor (Bath) and Elisa Brann (KCL). The team was brilliantly supported by Jo Gildersleeve and Harriet Lloyd.

Designed in collaboration with teachers, students and museum curators, the VRO is an accessible tool for teaching, about both Dodona specifically and the ancient world more generally; it has also been exhibited in a number of museums and galleries. The VRO has also been used for research into the use of VR in classrooms, and psychological and physiological responses to VR. For those who would like to find out more, or experience the VRO for themselves, it can be downloaded from the project website (or directly from Google Play/Meta stores): vroracle.co.uk. The website also provides further information for teachers and students about the site of Dodona, and about the project.

We thank the AHRC for funding this project, and also the Leverhulme Trust, whose funding gave Eidinow the time and space to develop the

[1] The Virtual Reality Oracle (VRO) project ran from June 2020 to August 2023, inclusive, and was funded by the AHRC: AH/T004673/1; see vroracle.co.uk.

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research proposal that led to the AHRC award. We are so very grateful to those who supported the project in many different ways: in particular, we thank the Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities of Ioannina, Greece; the teachers and museum curators who supported the project's development and dissemination; Kalliopi Stara at the University of Ioannina, Greece, who told us so much about the trees of the region; Callum Armstrong, who composed the music and played the aulos for the VRO; Nick Kontonicolas at 1000birds.com; and everyone at Friday Sundae.

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