'specific themes operate in Sontag's associative network as projections on an ancient Greek screen' (157). The consistent development of this theme throughout the volume structures the approach to classical reception very effectively.

RHIANNON EASTERBROOK

Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
rhiannon.easterbrook@rhul.ac.uk

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General review

It has been an exciting and eventful ten years since Ivana and I were entrusted with the privilege and responsibility of editing *Greece & Rome*. The editorship has been an immensely enriching and genuinely rewarding experience for us both, one for which we feel profoundly grateful.

The journal has given us the opportunity to engage with an extraordinary community of scholars, teachers, students, and readers. I have learned an enormous amount from our authors, referees, and colleagues responsible for subject reviews, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of them for their generosity, expertise, and for both their good humour and the seriousness of their commitment. What has struck me repeatedly over the years has been the remarkable energy, collegiality, kindness, and enthusiasm that continue to animate our discipline. A hiccup here and a pandemic there notwithstanding, the dedication of everyone involved – whether in research, teaching, reviewing, production, or administrative work – has been both inspiring and reassuring. I personally have no doubt that the study of the ancient world, broadly conceived, will remain a vital, dynamic, and forward-looking endeavour with a bright future ahead of it, and with a place for everyone interested in and passionate about the ancient world.

We are also deeply grateful to you, our readers, whose continued interest and support have sustained the journal over the years. Thank you: it has truly been a privilege to serve in this capacity, and we look forward to passing the baton to a new editorial team in 2027, with great confidence and enthusiasm for the journal's future.

For this issue, I will keep the General Review concise and focus on the three remaining volumes that we have received. We start with religious epigraphy and another important volume from the *Kernos* Supplements series, dedicated in its entirety to a single but lengthy and noteworthy ritual norm from Thessaly. Jan-Mathieu Carbon and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, who together with Saskia Peels-Matthey have established the now essential and ever-growing 'Corpus of Greek Ritual Norms (CGRN)',[1] have joined forces and edited a rich volume dedicated to a recent, remarkable epigraphic find, a ritual text from Marmarini (CGRN 225).[2] The inscription was discovered in 2002 in

[1] http://cgrn.ulg.ac.be/

[2] *La Norme rituelle de Marmarini. Essais d'interprétation*. Edited by J.-M. Carbon and V. Pirenne-Delforge. Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège, 2025. Pp. 266. Paperback €30, ISBN: 978-2-87562-479-6.

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proximity to Larisa, and from the start it was clear that the text was a precious one: the length of the text alone was highly unusual, and the content of the regulation (actually, of a dossier of regulations) was and remains in many ways baffling. So unusual, in fact, that luminaries in the field of Greek religion have for good reasons variously described the inscription from Marmarini as a bombshell and an earthquake.

Dated to the late third or second century BC, the opistograph stele (i.e. stele inscribed on both its front and back face) provides an extraordinary insight into a multicultural world of the Hellenistic period where Greeks, Syrians, and other eastern Mediterranean ethnicities mixed traditions, gods, and rituals into something entirely new – and now we encounter the evidence for this medley in a place where one would perhaps not necessarily expect this to happen.

More than 130 surviving lines of text, a good deal of it complete, provide often detailed overview of a local cult centred on a goddess whose identity is unclear: some have suggested that the goddess may have been connected to the famous Syrian goddess Atargatis, but the evidence for this is elusive, complicated, and slippery. In fact, one of the most striking features of the new text is that the goddess is nowhere explicitly named (one contribution in the volume, authored jointly by Biagetti, Bonnet, and Porzia, makes the case that this is an intentional feature owing to the initiatory character of the cult, on which see below). Nonetheless, it is perfectly clear that she was an important deity since her sanctuary was fairly elaborate and bustling with activity (the sanctuary is yet to be located; the inscription itself is probably carved on a so-called 'wandering stone', found, it seems, at some distance from the sanctuary to which it relates). In terms of complexity, the text suggests an impressive site as it mentions the sanctuary's walls, gateways, altars, a temple, statues, and even a peristyle courtyard lined with ritual regulations and altars for a number of divinities, some of which are known from the Greek pantheon (Moira, Helios), others clearly foreign. Some sanctuary areas appear to have been dedicated to divinities with Greek names, such as Artemis and Apollo, while others belonged to stranger figures with foreign-sounding names such as Adara(s) and Lilla(s). In any case, the gods worshipped there reveal a fascinating cultural blend. One deity mentioned in the text is especially intriguing: Pan is explicitly identified with the Syrian god Nergal under the name 'Neirigles' (Face A, lines 9–10: θύειν τῶι Πανὶ ὃν Σύροι Νειριγλην καλοῦσιν, 'to sacrifice to Pan whom Syrians call Neirigles'). Other figures, such as the just-mentioned Moira (Fate) and Helios, may also disguise eastern deities beneath Greek labels, but this is sheer guesswork. What is unquestionable is that the sanctuary of this goddess, whatever her exact identity may have been, was a place where religious identities merged and evolved.

The cult calendar followed Near-Eastern rhythms as well. Two major festivals, the Nisanaia and the Eloulaia, were named after Near-Eastern months associated with the Mesopotamian calendar, corresponding roughly to spring and autumn. These festivals, performed in the sanctuary, included sacrifices, purifications, processions, offerings, and communal rituals. The level of detail is astonishing, as one section of the inscription even lays out a day-by-day schedule for ceremonies. At its core, the cult unquestionably had an initiatory character, accompanied by, as the more recent readings of the stone suggest, a healing component as well.

For most scholars, the most exciting feature of the text has been its detailed description of sacrifices, and especially one section which makes an explicit reference to a sacrifice for the goddess performed 'in the Greek manner' (Face B, lines 34–5: ἐὰν δέ

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τις θύειν βούληται τῆι θεῶι Ἑλληνικῶι νόμωι, 'if someone wishes to sacrifice to the goddess following the Greek manner'). This is a major discovery because it shows ancient worshippers consciously distinguishing between Greek and non-Greek ritual modes of sacrifice, and there is nothing quite like this attestation elsewhere in the Greek epigraphic evidence. Some sacrifices involved burning portions of animals on altars, as is well known from traditional Greek religious practices, while others mentioned sacrifices and rituals which display a different character: *trapezoplēsia* ('table-filling ritual'), 'raising of the tray', and 'all-day ceremonies'.

It is no wonder that the Marmarini text attracted significant scholarly attention almost immediately following its publication. The new volume takes stock, in effect, of the debate thus far and simultaneously raises many new questions. On the whole, the ten contributions paint a vivid picture of the new document from nearly every angle: the introduction, penned by the editors, brings readers up to speed with scholarship; three contributions study, broadly speaking, the eastern background of the Marmarini inscription and its place in the Hellenistic religious and cultural *koinē* (Biagetti et al. mentioned above; Lebreton on the character of Apollo and Artemis in this specific ensemble of divinities; Darshan on striking parallels with the Book of Leviticus); this section is followed by Carbon on the inscription's layout, issues of legibility, purity, and its bricolage nature at Marmarini (which chimes well with other studies that have identified the bricolage nature of certain ritual norms concerned with purity[3]); then, four chapters on offerings, that is sacrifices and liquids specifically; Parker on the meagre ancient sources explicitly tackling the issue of the diversity of sacrificial practices; Marti on sacrifices at Marmarini and their Mesopotamian pendants; Chandezon and D'Andrea more broadly on the whole (somewhat surprising) sacrificial bestiary listed by the text; and Zerhoch on liquids (wine, olive oil, rose oil, water, and blood). The volume is bookended by Minon's fine study of the linguistic, philological, and onomastic features of the text, an edition of the Greek text accompanied by French and English translation, good indices, bibliography, and three plates with four images in total. This volume is now the first port of call for anyone interested in this wonderful and challenging text – and there is plenty to learn from it. The sanctuary of the unnamed goddess was clearly a hybrid institution shaped by migrants, local Greeks, and travelling religious experts; more broadly, Hellenistic Thessaly emerges not as an isolated Greek region, but as part of a connected Mediterranean world where ideas, people, and gods moved freely across cultural boundaries, and the new text provides us with a snapshot of a culturally globalized ancient world.

From Thessaly, we move to the north, in fact to the central Balkans, my original neck of the woods, and a new volume of the fabulous *Inscriptiones Graecae* (*IG* X 2,2,2)[4] containing inscriptions from Macedonia Septentrionalis, that is from the Vardar (Axios), Bregalnica (Astibos), and Strumica valleys specifically. Thanks to Slavica Babamova (and the *IG* team of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy) about 800

[3] For bricolage in purity regulations, see, e.g. my 'Inner Purity, Ritual Purity, Conscience: Perspective of the Greek Ritual Norms (on LSCG 139)', in L. Döring and J. Frey (eds.), *Purity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: Proceedings from the 10th Schwerte Qumran Meeting, 10–12 February 2019*, pp. 175–91 (Mohr Siebeck, 2024).

[4] *IG X, 2, 2, 2. Inscriptiones in vallibus fluviorum Axii, Astibi, Strumicae inventae*. Edited by Slavica Babamova. Berlin and Boston, De Gruyter, 2024. Pp. xiv + 556. 123 plates, 1 map. Hardback €360, ISBN: 978-3-11-133136-2.

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inscriptions from this area have been edited or re-edited and included for the first time in an *IG* volume as a sequel to its sibling volume.[5] An interested reader may wish to look back at my review in the *G&R* issue 69.1 in which I sketched out its further relatives, volumes *IG* X 2, 1s, and *IG* X 2, 1 (edited by †Despoina Papakonstantinou-Diamantourou, Elena Martín González, and Klaus Hallof). The new volume is a wonderful addition to this admirably accurate, meticulous, and painstakingly produced series, and the editor and her collaborators should be applauded for their work. The quality of the plates is splendid, and the lettering of many inscriptions is just gorgeous (my favourites being Nos 512 and 623 which I appreciated greatly for their angular, steam-punky, almost sci-fi adjacent aesthetics). The highlights are too many to list, but one funerary inscription really made me both chuckle and tear up a bit (No. 511): 'Patoumases (*sic*), son of Andron. Everyone's friend, nobody's foe'. One of the many reasons I greatly enjoy reading inscriptions is that this material makes me feel as if I have an unmediated access to the lives, hopes, and aspirations of both ordinary and extra-ordinary people. It also reminds me of humility when it comes to the Greek: χῖντε (No. 437) for κεῖνται ('they lie') and ἀθυκεστάτῃ (No. 440) for ἀτυχεστάτῃ ('for the most unfortunate woman') will do that for most of us. Humility is part and parcel of inner purity, another topic dear to my heart; a pretty mosaic inscription from a basilica in Stobi comes close to stating this explicitly (No. 750): εὐχαὶ καὶ ἐλεημοσύναι καὶ νηστίαι καὶ μετάνοια ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας ἐκ θανάτου ῥύετε, 'Prayers, compassion, abstentions and repentance from a pure heart deliver (one) from death'.

Finally, I turn to Chiara Thumiger's intellectual and medical history examining a somewhat perplexing and often deadly disease which the ancients labelled *phrenitis*.[6] Originally, *phrenitis* was a term denoting an acute bodily inflammation with severe consequences for one's mental health (think of the etymological cognates 'frantic' and 'frenetic' in English). In terms of its symptoms, the condition was associated with fever, restlessness, incongruous speech, stupor and sensory impairment, followed by delirium, confusion, and agitation, and ending with a general mental disturbance with a lethal outcome arising in a matter of days. *Phrenitis* eventually became also more broadly conceived as an 'incarnation of a moral flaw' (188, 294–5), a term approaching a slur, and was even employed for diagnosis of daemonic possession (187–9). While the term *phrenitis* and the associated diagnosis are nowadays outdated and, from modern medicine's viewpoint obsolete, this disease was a major concern of doctors and medical writers for nearly 2,400 years; in fact, Thumiger's 'biography of the disease' (367) concludes with its demise in scientific medicine in the nineteenth century and an overview of the resonances of the disease's history in twentieth- and twenty-first-century medicine. Ten robust, exciting, and erudite chapters thus present us with a synoptic overview of 'the only ancient disease of the mental sphere (and one of the very ancient few diseases generally) that can be discussed in … a continuous manner' (7). And indeed, a disease which made its way also into veterinary medicine and was at one point believed to affect even farm animals, with, delightfully, the sole exception of dogs (354).

[5] *IG X, 2, 2, 1. Inscriptiones Lyncestidis, Heracleae, Pelagoniae, Derriopi, Lychnidi*. Edited by Fanoula Papazoglu, Milena Milin, Marijana Ricl, adiuvante Klaus Hallof, XIII, 262 S., 1 tab. geographica, LX tab. (1999).

[6] *Phrenitis and the Pathology of the Mind in Western Medical Thought (Fifth Century BCE to Twentieth Century CE)*. By Chiara Thumiger. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. x + 448. Paperback £34.99, ISBN: 978-1-009-24134-2.

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Less delightful, but in the present moment rather instructive, were nuggets regarding the unwitting and pathological joy of *phrenetics*, who take delight in their state while inflicting harm and injustice onto those around them (205, 295–7).

A major theme of the book is the instability of the boundary between mental and physical illness. Thumiger skillfully and with nuance demonstrates the manifold ways in which ancient physicians did not sharply distinguish what we call psychiatry from general medicine: throughout its history, *phrenitis* occupied a liminal space between fever, neurological disorder, and insanity. Thumiger's book is a *tour de force* and a major accomplishment, bringing together medical texts, philosophy, literature, and religious sources to cast light on broader cultural attitudes towards delirium and altered mental states. And it really does, as the blurb on the cover promises, force us to think about our own ideas related to (in)sanity.

That's all, folks!

ANDREJ PETROVIC

University of Virginia, USA
andrej.petrovic@virginia.edu

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