The stuff of the gods

The material aspects of religion in ancient Greece

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ABSTRACT

The "material turn" in the humanities and social sciences has brought about an expanded understanding of the material dimension of all cultural and social phenomena. In the Classics it has resulted in the breaking down of boundaries within the discipline and a growing interest in materiality within literature. In the study of religion cross-culturally new perspectives are emphasising religion as a material phenomenon and belief as a practice founded in the material world. This volume brings together experts in all aspects of Greek religion to consider its material dimensions. Chapters cover both themes traditionally approached by archaeologists, such as dedications and sacred space, and themes traditionally approached by philologists, such as the role of objects in divine power. They include a wide variety of themes ranging from the imminent material experience of religion for ancient Greek worshippers to the role of material culture in change and continuity over the long term.

Keywords: Greek religion, Etruscan religion, Mycenaean religion, materiality, religious change, *temenos*, temples, offerings, cult statues, terracottas, *omphalos*, cauldrons, sacred laws, visuality, purity, pollution, gods' identities, divine power, inscribed dedications

https://doi.org/10.30549/actaath-4-59

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5. Movable sacrality

Considerations on oscillating sacredness of material objects relating Greek sanctuaries

Abstract

In this article material objects related to sanctuaries are considered in relation to two main frameworks, namely their spatiality and their perceived ownership. Land and terrain as locus for more fixed sacredness provides a starting point to elaborate less fixed sacredness of movable items which often were profitable also in profane commercial terms. Changes and fluctuation in the perception of sacredness of such objects is connected with the changes in the ownership of them and with the spatial location they were kept or deposited. Material, such as meat and hides from sacrificial rituals, (*hierothyta*) was often further sold or used in the production of utensils, and in such cases the original sacredness was recognised in a higher esteem of the quality. It is argued that since sacred was not rendered as a polar opposite to profane and whereas consecration was a central principle and ritual act in Greek antiquity it did not manifest in an opposite of ritual of desecration.

Introduction

The so-called *ou phora* rule is well-documented in cult regulations and stipulated that the meat had to be consumed within the sanctuary and not taken elsewhere.[1] The *ou phora*-regulation itself reflects the view that items brought to a sanctuary were generally expected to stay there, but equally it exemplifies a take-away practice in permitted situations: meat which was not eaten on the spot or burnt away for the gods was taken out of the sanctuary. This concerned customarily also inedible parts of sacrificed animals such as their hides, sinews, guts and bowels, horns and other extremities which could be processed in further production of commodities.[2] The last partially preserved lines (Face B 84–92) of the purity regulation *CGRN* 148 (= *LSCG* 154) from the Asklepieion on Cos dated to *c.* 240 BC concern pregnant sacrificial animals. It apparently envisages the possibility that if an animal bought to the sanctuary and sacrificed to a god or goddess (line 84) turns out not to be a pregnant animal it is regarded as an unproper animal to be sacrificed to the deity in question. The inscription seems to advise that the person who has made the sacrifice should return (part of?) the sacrificed animal back to the vendor (and get refunded?), but only in the cases where a take-away of animals is allowed. A vendor could then sell another animal, which should be offered in a renewed sacrifice.[3]

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[1] Customarily "no take-away", οὐ φορά or οὐκ ἐκφορά, concerns meat which thence was to be consumed on the spot in sanctuaries. "No take-away"-specification occurs regularly, for representative examples, see e.g. the sacrificial calendar *CGRN* 52 (= *LSCG* 18) from Erchia (375–350 BC), lines A 11, 21, 38, B 39, 59, Γ 6, 10, 18, 53, 64, Δ 6, 10, 38, 46, 55, E 7, 21, 27–30, 37, 63–64; *CGRN* 59 (= *LSCG* 132) from the vicinity of Thera (400–300 BC) stating that sacrifice (δοιαί, "two-fold offerings") for the Nymphs by the tribe of Hylleis are οὐκ ἀποφορά. For the discussion of the *ou phora*-rule, see esp. Ekroth 2002, 159, 313–325; Larson 1995, 30–31.

[2] Sometimes meat was *ou phora*, but the skin was nevertheless to be given as prerogative, i.e. it could be further sold, see e.g. the sacrificial calendar of Erchia *CGRN* 52 (see above, previous n.), where a goat is to be sacrificed to Dionysos (lines Δ35–40) and sheep to the Heroines (E6–8) are *ou phora* and the skin is to go to the priestess (ἱερέαι τὸ δέρμα). On the contrary *CGRN* 128 (= Lupu 2005, no. 24) apparently from the sanctuary of Asclepios at Lissos in Crete dated to 325–200 BC states (lines 4–5) that meat is not to be taken away, skins are given to the gods, i.e. either burnt to the gods or kept in the sanctuary (κρεῶν οὐκ ἀποφορά. τὸ δέρμα τῶι θεῶι). For skins used in leather production see Pakkanen forthcoming, for sausage-production from sacrificial meat, see Ekroth 2008, 261, n. 8 with references to sausage manufacturing and the cleaning of intestines.

[3] Lines 84–90: αἰ δέ κα ..?..] θύοντι θεοῖς ἢ θεαῖς οἷσιν κυόεν[τα..?..] ανεν τῶν θυομένων ἱερείων ἅ κα[..?.. τ]ὸμ πριάμενον ἀποδόμεν τῶι ἀ[ποδομένωι ..?.. τούτων ἢ ἀπο]φορά· τὸν δὲ ἀποδόμενον τὸ[..?..] ὅτι οὐ κύοεν οὐκ ἀπέδοτο, [..?.. τού]των ἢι ἀποφορά, ἀποδόμεν [..?.. τὸ]

This example shows that spatial placement and commercial transactions in relation to sanctuary space were important factors in the role of the commodities such as sacrificial meat and other parts of the animals, and that both of these aspects were carefully regulated. Parts of sacrificed animals were indeed profitable in economic terms.[4] For example, meat from sacrificially killed animals was regarded as optimal and most recommended meat to eat, a good quality commodity sold separately on the (profane) market,[5] and leather made of the skins of sacrificed animals was in certain cases likewise qualified as ἱερόθυτον which would guarantee the good quality of the products made of such material.[6] What happens to the perceived sacredness of materials and objects when they oscillate between sacred and profane spaces and markets and how does their role change in terms of their perceived sacredness? This theme is elaborated in the following and it will be argued that movable items related to sanctuaries exhibit different sacrality than land and terrain because their ownership could change more easily from divine to human. The role of ownership and spatiality of portable material relating sanctuaries and ritual acts are thereafter elaborated in more detail and finally the question about the act of rendering an item sacred will be addressed.

Fixed and unfixed sacrality

Land is naturally of basic importance in spatiality of the sacred. Sanctuaries were tied to the land given over to the gods' ownership. Various terms including *hieron*, *temenos* etc. in all their ambiguity and overlapping meanings were used to designate sacred enclosures or places being most principally "land

marked of from common use and dedicated to a divinity", thus being "place set aside".[7] It is possible that a primarily concrete division between sacred and profane existed in the physical form on the terrain, and marking off sacred land as a procedure can be regarded as a primary consecration, often used also as an aetiology for cultic practice.[8] It set the spatial boundaries for the future exchange between mortals and the divinities.[9] For example, in his mythical aetiology of the founding of the sanctuary at Olympia and the games Pindar (*Ol.* 10. 45–49) explains how Heracles measured out a sacred grove for his supreme father, enclosed the Altis all around and marked it off in the open and made the surrounding plain the resting place for feasting and honouring the stream of Alpheios along with the twelve ruling gods: Σταθμᾶτο ζάθεον ἄλσος πατρὶ μεγίστῳ· περὶ δὲ πάξαις Ἄλτιν μὲν ὅγ' ἐν καθαρῷ διέκρινε, τὸ δὲ κύκλῳ πέδον ἔθηκε δόρπου λύσιν, τιμάσαις πόρον Ἀλφεοῦ μετὰ δώδεκ' ἀνάκτων θεῶν.[10] The specificity of land and terrain in terms of sacredness is probably due to the fact that it is not movable, by nature fixed. The verb for establish is *hidryein*, encompassing the meanings of "found", "establish", "set up", "firmly seat", "fix", "settle" but also "consecrate", and "dedicate".[11]

Originally this involved territorial organization to mark off space for special purposes, although the term was also used for setting up cultic paraphernalia, altars, statues, and other equipment needed for various rituals.[12] *Hidrysis* means

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ἱαρήιον ἀποδόμεν τὰν τι[μὰν ..².].[αἰ δέ κα ..².] ἔπεσθαι ἐπὶ θυσίαν. See J.-M. Carbon and S. Peels in the commentary on *CGRN*.

[4] It has been argued that a type of commercial infrastructure developed around the cult: markets responded most often to sacrificial demand since meat and related goods such as suet, hides, and sinews most often had their origins in cultic activity. See e.g. Hodkinson 1992; Howe 2008, e.g. 54–57, 110–119; 2011, 11–12; 2014, 144–146; cf. McInerney 2010, esp. 64, 183.

[5] Ekroth 2007, 271 noting that "this meat was not only of guaranteed good quality as coming from recently killed and healthy animals, it was the most sacred of all meat, imbued with the divine." Berthiaume 1982, 65, 67–69 accepts the difference between sacrificial and non-sacrificial meat, but thinks that the first was by rule sold in the sanctuary context and the second at the agora. Parker 2010, 144 thinks that ἱερόθυτον should not be understood strictly as "sacrificially killed" but rather as "killed in a sanctuary" and not e.g. in the market. See also Isenberg 1975, 271–273; Cheung 1999, 32–34, 250–251; Lupu 2005, 71–72.

[6] In the texts e.g. Herodotus 6.57.1 refers to hides from sacrifices when he describes the Spartan manners, e.g. the kings receive the hides of the sacrificed animals from all the public sacrifices after having made libations: καὶ σπονδαρχίας εἶναι τούτων καὶ τῶν τυθέντων τὰ δέρματα. For leather made of *hierothyta*-hides, see below, p. 64.

[7] The issue is much discussed; see e.g. contributions in the special issue of *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 227 (2010), particularly by Patera and Horster; see also Bruit-Zaidman & Schmitt-Pantel 1992, 55. Papazarkadas 2011 is a comprehensive study on control, management of sacred and public lands and their economic, political and religious implications in Classical Athens. With reference to confusions as to the meaning of the Greek word *temenos* in the scholarship he reminds (p. 3) that the term applies to both a sanctuary and an arable sacred estate.

[8] Malkin 1987, 139; Modrzejewski 1963, 90–91; Carbon & Pirenne-Delforge 2013, 73.

[9] Parker 2004, 274 notes that the norm was to deposit dedications in an existing sacred space. Bodel 2009, 23–24 disagrees and with reference to private dedications thinks that location was not the main means that made them sacred. He notes that the common practice of classifying objects regarded as dedications and monuments by type (typologies) rather than by context (spatiality and locality) obscures the motivation and intent of an act of giving and exchange and this has resulted in terminological vagueness.

[10] Eckerman 2013, esp. 27–29, also 12, 17, 20–22 for discussion Pindar's use of the Olympian landscape and its subjugation especially in his odes as mythicised discourse of the colonial enterprise utilising the connection between Olympia, Heracles and the Hyperboreans.

[11] Hock claimed in his 1905 study on consecration practices of the ancient Greeks that the verb *hidryein* encompassed the meanings of "found", "set up", "seat" but also "consecrate". See Paz de Hoz 1998, 163; Parker 2004, 270; Rudhardt 2001, 177–180 for the consecration of land and more recently Papazarkadas 2011. Greek terminology for consecrating is varied; see below p. 62.

[12] Modrzejewski 1963, 90–91; Purvis 2003, 10–11; Pirenne-Delforge 2010, 126–130. For example, the well-known "First-fruits" decree at

therefore the installation of a deity among humans which in practice meant the founding of a cult that officially created the conditions for the god's benevolence and protection for the community.[13] The owners of the sacred enclosures were "installed" to their properties by founding (*hidrysis*) as a way to transfer ownership to the gods.[14] Demarcation of sacred land required some sort of consecration which might have involved ritual procedures. Purifications are the most obvious ones.[15] Sacred space was defined, even if not always by physical *horoi*-markers, and afterwards its nature as sacred enclosure was known even without any specific marker.[16] Once cutting off and demarcation was done it was not reversible in the same way as with objects or things. It had to be enforced if needed, and particularly it had to be kept up by purifications if there was any risk of defilement harming or threatening the sacredness.[17]

Built structures, erected statues, and all the cultic paraphernalia in the sanctuaries were *ta hiera* belonging to the dwelling (*naos*) of the gods and thus intrinsically sacred as the property of the gods. This property can be regarded to have largely been hereditary foundation guaranteeing permanence, and the officials who managed the loans, leases, rents, and other revenues worked nominally for the benefit of the deity.[18] Humans were needed to manage and administer gods' property in principle alike any other property maintained and protected by the mortals. This brought along inevitable alterations and changes, relocations and even moving built structures from a place to another as well as building them anew.[19] The inscriptions attesting lease agreements tend to ensure that the revenues of the incoming rents would "feed the god" and keep the surroundings of the sanctuary in good shape:[20] lessees are instructed in detail for example how to take care of the trees growing in a *temenos*[21] or how to use (and not use[22]) land for agricultural purposes or for keeping of animals. This rearrangement of the gods' belongings leads to the question concerning the changeable nature of sacredness of sacred property. As sacredness was tied to ownership which was transferable to humans either by selling or renting the property and hence fluctuating also in terms of location, we may ask whether active work on divine property and its drastic management could make it non-sacred or secular.

In recent scholarship sacred space is no longer considered as static or unchangeable but rather as continuously dynamic.[23] We know of cases where transfers of sacred location were rather extreme: moving building blocks from sacred enclosures and the reuse of them as material of other sacred

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Eleusis (*IG* I³ 78 A, lines 54–57, *c.* 435 BC) regulates the use of the area known as the Pelargikon around the western end of the Athenian Acropolis.: ... "The basileus is to set the boundaries of the sanctuaries (ὁρίσαι τὰ ἱερά) in the Pelargikon, and for the future no altar shall be set up (μὲ ἐνιδρύεσθαι βομός) in the Pelargikon without permission of the Council and People" (transl. here mostly according to Lambert and Osborne in *AIO*). See also McInerney 2014, 34.

[13] Pirenne-Delforge 2010, 128–130 regards such installation also as the very first occasion of communication between the deity and the community.

[14] Referring to old traditions (παλαιοὶ λόγοι) Plato tells in *Leg.* 5.738c that they instituted (καθίστασθαι) sacrifices combined with rites (θυσίας τελεταῖς συμμίκτους κατεστήσαντο) ... and by means of such sayings they founded (καθιέρωσαν) oracles and statues, and altars, and temples, and marked off a portion of land (ἐτεμένισαν) for each. This probably refers to the foundation of a more formal cult. In the cases of private cults foundations of cults concern the property, usually landed, and the use of the revenue for the reperformance of cult, principally periodical sacrifices and other enterprises related to the management of priesthoods and sanctuary's property; see Lupu 2005, 81–83; Campanelli 2017, 131–132.

[15] The terms denoting consecration (see below) often signify also purifying and hence it can be though that the most common way to ritually render something sacred or remove its impurity was to ritually purify it, were it of space, or an object or a person. The verb ἀφαγνίζω with strong allusion of purifying is used particularly in drama (e.g. Eur. *Alc.* 1146).

[16] Rudhardt 2001, 176. See also Horster 2010, 440, 454; Patera 2010, 546. It is notable that even if there were *horos*-markers, their meaning as boundary-markers would not have been transhistorically fixed; their physical location was not fixed either as the markers could be (and often were) moved according to changes in boundaries themselves. See Ober 2005, 190–191; Sartre 1979, 217 (on *hermaia*). E.g. *IG* II² 204 = *LSCG* 32 (352/1 BC) sets rules for demarcating the sacred meadow (*orgas*) sacred to Demeter and Kore near Eleusis on the boundary between Athens and Megara with boundary markers (*stelai*, esp. lines 14–15, 25–26); see Papazarkadas 2011, 144–152.

[17] In Burkert's (1988, 43–44) interpretation of the reasons for the aristocratic dominance of the panhellenic sanctuaries particularly during the Archaic period they are primarily seen as public places designed for the display and preservation of the *anathemata*, gifts that were raised up (and fixed) there as a demonstration of something that was to permanently remain and this permanence corresponds to the idea of local stability on which the *polis* is based.

[18] See Chankowski 2005, esp. 70–73. The system and management of the revenues was complex and varied from a sanctuary to another. In principle the treasury (παρακαταθήκη) was not used for circulation but stayed as a treasury entrusted to sanctuary's care ("to the god") while other, profit-turning running operations were administered by the officials and other functionaries. Migeotte 2008, 325–327, 331 discusses the revenues which were to be identified under the general term τέλη by the end of the Archaic period.

[19] See below, p. 60.

[20] Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 47.4 ("letting out *temenoi*"). The earliest decree where a *temenos* (of Neleus and Basile) is leased, its boundaries marked by *horoi* (stones), tenants' names are instructed to be written up and the lease conditions stipulated is *IG*³ 84 from Athens (418/17 BC). Papazarkadas 2011, 23, 84, stresses the fact that the recipients of the rental were the treasurers of the Other Gods. See Langdon in Lalonde *et al.* 1991, 154–155, 166–167, and 152–168 for leasing of public and private land followed by a catalogue of inscriptions. See also Dillon 1997, 116–118; Horster 2010, esp. 438–440; Patera 2010, 546.

[21] For vegetation and caring of it in sanctuaries, see Dillon 1997 (esp. 116–117, nn. 33–36 for references to epigraphical material in particular).

[22] Restrictions for prohibiting or limiting cultivation are rather common (Eleusis being probably the most well-known case; see e.g. *IG* II² 204 from 352/1 BC and Parker 1983, 163–164). Dillon 1997, 120–122 for pasturing herds of animals within *temenoi*.

[23] See e.g. Mylonopoulos 2008.

or profane structures is not entirely exceptional, but in some cases even entire sacred enclosures were relocated. These are in practice dismantled buildings moved to be rebuilt in another location,[24] not mere transfers of cultic practices, rituals and elements of cultic settings from a place to another.[25] Such transfers of entire sanctuaries are exceptional,[26] but we can nevertheless observe them having taken place on the basis of textual, epigraphical and archaeological testimonia.[27] The combination of the fixity and movability of the sacredness manifested itself in spatial terms also in such cases: land in the new location had to be similarly consecrated, given over to the deity and when built structures were dismantled to be built again they turned into movable paraphernalia which in a new location again becomes spatially fixed into sacred terrain. Such examples exemplify that moving and relocating boundaries of the sacred locations was not regarded as impossible, albeit a subject of scrutiny often requiring divinely sanctioned approval. In the recent frame of the "dynamics" of ancient religion Ioannis Mylonopoulos places transmissions, adjustments and even radical changes in architectural settings of sanctuaries under the larger phenomenon of "dynamics of ritual space" which reasonably has replaced the view of unchangeable fixity of religious space.[28] Furthermore, it has been argued that land surrounding a sanctuary could temporarily receive a religious quality, such as in cases when a festival with fairs and markets took place in the proximity of the sanctuary.[29] Thus, sacredness could perhaps "intensify" from time to time, and this in turn may tell us something about the Greek conceptualisation of the sacred as a nuanced concept in which both fixity and fluctuation manifest themselves.

Therefore, objects which were portable, and were moved and transported in and out of sacred enclosures, exhibit a slightly different nature than the terrain and land when it comes to their perceived sacredness. Their role could alter between fixed sacredness and hence exhibit more flexible sacrality according to changes in their spatial location and status in ownership. In simplified and rounded terms, movable items and material inside a *temenos* belonged to the god and they were sacred, but outside of it they belonged to a human being where their sacredness also altered or ceased. This is tied to the usability of such objects or items: if they were of pragmatic and economic value, their sacredness could be "used" and turned into pragmatic, economic value. For example, sacrificial animals had to be perfect specimens (ἔντελες: healthy, without blemish) and hence their meat as well the quality of other parts of their bodies provided high quality material for further sale or for the production of utensils. This phenomenon can be seen in the parts of the sacrificed animals which were sold as commodities, the objects made of *hierothyta*.

Sanctuaries, in Attica at least, had two principal types of funds which overlapped each other somewhat, but were determined by the ownership, handling and purpose for their use. These were the so-called *hieros* money and *hosion* money (ἱερὰ καὶ ὅσια χρήματα). Both types of money were handled by the officials, but the owner was either the god(s) or men, and the "sacred" (*hieros*) money funded the maintenance of the gods' property, like the buildings and perquisites of the priesthood, while *hosios* money was used varyingly yet with public sacrifices constituting its main use.[30] There was also a category of property and objects which were "semi-fixed" to sanctuaries,

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[24] Such buildings are variously characterised as "itinerant" (Thompson 1962), "peripatetic buildings" (Dinsmoor 1974, 233), "transplanted buildings" (Dinsmoor 1974, 238) or "transportable" (Petronotis 1980, 329). See also Barletta 2017, 222. I owe these observations to Ioanna Patera.

[25] Mylonopoulos 2008 discusses such transfers and relocations ("copying" of cult) with examples from Asia Minor, the Near East and Greece particularly in the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods when their reasons varied from political, military, ethnic or mercantile to those relating colonisation and changes in religious ideology.

[26] Quantin & Quantin 2007, 193; see also Mylonopoulos 2008, 70–71.

[27] Known cases are collected by Ioanna Patera who provided the following examples from a) textual, b) archaeological and c) epigraphical material respectively. A: Strabo (9.2.10) relates how the sanctuary of Amphiaraos from Knopia close to Thebes was transferred to Oropos as a response to an oracle (ἐκ Κνωπίας δὲ τῆς Θηβαϊκῆς μεθιδρύ[θη κατὰ χρησμὸν] δεῦρο τὸ Ἀμφιαράειον). B: The original location of the Classical temple of Ares seen by Pausanias (1.8.4) at the Athenian Agora is disputed in archaeological literature and it has been shown that the original location of this later temple, the foundations of which incorporated many reused building blocks, was instead in Pallene where the honoured deity had been Athena; see Korres 1992–1998, 95–96. C: The so-called Grande inscription du Louvre (*LSCG* 72, Louvre, inv. 3064) dated between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd century BC, relates that the city consulted the oracle wishing to know whether it was better for the people of Tanagra to let the sanctuary (*hieron*) of Demeter and Kore, to remain where it was or to transfer it (ἢ μεταφερόντυς) either to the place called Euameria or move it within the city. Apollo replied that people had to receive the goddesses "in the precinct of the city" (στεφάνυ δέκεσθη) invoking them (εὐχομένως). The place was thereafter chosen by the polemarchs, the *sundikoi*, and an elected board of eleven men. When the decree was enforced, the people were to elect a board of three citizens for three years to erect the sanctuary and make decisions with the polemarchs and the architect; see Migeotte 1992, no. 91, esp. pp. 75–81.

[28] Mylonopoulos 2008, esp. 75–78. The "dynamics of religion approach" concerns mostly ritual actions which naturally are also related to the spatiality of religion; see contributions esp. in Chaniotis *et al.* 2010; Bochinger & Rüpke 2017.

[29] Horster 2010, 454.

[30] Blok 2010, 16–17, 19–23; 2014, 62–68, 70, 79–84, 88 for examples of the semantic uses of the term. She notes (pp. 83–84) also the weigh that *hieros* money has gained on the expense of the *hosios* money since most inscribed public accounts concern financial transactions in which the money of the gods is variously entitled in order to show that religious duties and bonds with the gods had been observed. Peels 2016, esp. 225–227, 254–255 argues that application of *hosios* to monies works as "framing", i.e. claiming that the monies were used in the manner that would please the gods.

namely the environmental elements such as trees and other vegetation, furniture and equipment used for cultic needs (χρηστήρια σκεύη) which were part of the sacred property of the gods.[31] Trees were often protected on behalf of the gods, and it was sometimes regarded that when wood was dead, it was no longer sacred and hence could be taken away and used for profane purposes.[32] This reflects two concerns, namely a need to define what was the property of the gods and, if it was to be used for the benefit of the humans, to regulate it.

Thus, the Cyreneian purity regulation *CGRN* 99 (*LSS* 115 dated to 325–300 BC), in stating that the wood growing in the sanctuary of Apollo could be used for "sacred, profane and impure purposes" (face A lines 8–10: κ]ᾶλον ἐν ἰαρῶι πεφυκός· αἴ κα τῶι θεῶι τὰν τιμὰν [ἐ]ρεῖσες, τῶι κάλωι χρησῆι καὶ ἐς ἱαρὰ καὶ ἐς βάβ[α][λα] καὶ ἐς μιαρά) if the proper price is paid for the god,[33] reveals the attitude regarding the sacredness and non-sacredness of materiality: the use of wood growing in the sanctuary (and hence in principle owned by the god) is allowed by the humans for various purposes which are categorised as those directly connected with either worship, such as sacrifices (ἱερά), secular use such as maintenance (βέβηλα), or acts involving dealings with impurity such as purifications (μιαρά). Trees may well have been sacred property of the gods, but when the wooden materials they provided were needed, trees were not just untouchable but also utilitarian, or even practical in a profane sense.

Turning it sacred: Consecration and fluidity of sacredness

Sacred and profane were not clear opposites in Greek thought and religious practice in the same way that they are often perceived today. Whereas consecration, a more or less legal transfer of property from mortals to the divine realm was a basic religious ritual, desacration is unknown in the spectrum of Greek rituals. The modern mind tends to think that, at least conceptually, a ritual act of sacralisation implies the possibility of the reverse procedure of desacralisation (or desecration[34]). In the study of modern religions desecration is usually connected with secularisation.[35] If desecration is reflected upon through a phenomenon of secularisation, we run into difficulty to comprehend the Greek multiplicity of the meanings of consecration: secularisation does not seem to adequately explain anything regarding ancient Greek religion since secular and sacred were simply not strictly opposed to one another in the way they often are regarded in modern religions.[36] David Chidester and Edward Linenthal discern two forms of desecration, namely defilement and dispossession.[37] Their focus is on contemporary culture, but purity and the implications of a change of ownership are central also for our understanding of ancient Greek attitudes and practices towards sacred space and sacred objects. The Greek terms seem to point to a phenomenon of desecration by denoting, for example, an item that is not consecrated, an unoffered sacrifice (ἀνίερος),[38]

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[31] These items included furniture and objects needed for cultic purposes. We find them mentioned in temple inventories and other inscriptions. This group of movable objects in sanctuaries, including containers, thrones, bed-couches, stools and tables, was designed to be part of the sanctuary and thus to stay there as the property of the gods. For example, a 6th century BC inscription (*LSS* 27, lines 6–8) from Argos forbids the use of the sacred furniture or equipment (ἱερά σκεύη) outside the temple, and a much later, 2nd century AD regulation (*LSS* 117, line 8) rules out taking such furnishing out: μηδὲ ἔξω σκεύη φέρειν. For comprehensive discussion on the furniture in particular, see Andrianou 2006, esp. 566–557, 573–579.

[32] This is the case e.g. on Gortyn in Crete: *LSCG* 148 (*IC* IV 186, 200–150 BC). In some cases it is separately stipulated that wood from trees within a *temenos* could be used for construction work within the sanctuary, like at Argos *LSCG* 57 (*IG* XII 5, 108, *IG* IV 557, lines 5–7), discussed by Horster 2004, 114 and on Paros *LSCG* 111 (late 5th century BC), lines 2–4. For the issue, see Dillon 1997, esp. 115–117; Horster 2004, esp. 113–118; Lupu 2005, 26–27.

[33] See also Parker 1983, 335; Dillon 1997, 118.

[34] Usually known as desecration although its close equivalent "desacralisation" is sometimes used, and terminologically consecration and sacralisation are almost interchangeable. Some nuances seem to differentiate the terms in the scholarly literature: emphasis varies between action- or ritual-based point of view (desacralisation) and a more abstract and general term (desecration). The interest in religious studies in these phenomena may go back to Hubert & Mauss 1964, who characterised sacrificial ritual in general as an act of sacralisation and desacralisation. Patera 2012, 40–46 discusses the "desacralisation" in Greek religion rejecting the traditional interpretation that considers the consecration of premises or parts of animals as a gesture of desecration permitting their consumption by humans.

[35] See e.g. Hanson 1997, 159–179.

[36] Cf. Stark & Iannacone 1994, 250–252.

[37] Chidester & Linenthal 1992, 2. They specify the first one as "violation of the ritual order through which the purity of a sacred place is maintained." This can be "addressed through rites of purification or rites of exclusion, such as excommunication, banishment or execution which eliminate a polluting influence from the pure space of the sacred." See also Linenthal 2011.

[38] E.g. in Eur. *El.* 677 Orestes calls unpaid funerary rites ἀνόσια and in *Hipp.* 146 the chorus ask grieving Phaedra whether she is "tainted with failure to offer the holy *pelanos*" using the word *anieros* for this unoffered sacrifice (ἀνίερος ἄθυτος πέλανος). The verb ἀνιερόω, to dedicate, appears in this meaning e.g. in an early inscription *LSS* 32 dated to the end of the 6th century BC and carved on a bronze plaque from an unidentified locality in Northern Arkadia states that if a woman wears a brightly coloured robe it is to be given over to Demeter Thesmophoros ([εἰκαν γυ]νὰ φέσεται ζτεραίον λōπος, [ἱερὸ]ν ἔναι ταῖ Δάματρι (ταῖ) Θεσμοφόροι (lines 1–3) and stipulates a penalty that follows "if she does not consecrate/dedicate the garment" ([εἰ δὲ] μὲ ὑνιερόσει line 3), using the verb ὑνιερόσει from the form of the verb ἀνιερόω. This inscription is discussed by Beattie 1947, esp. 68–69 and his reading is followed here. The verb ἀνιερόω is used by Arist. [*Oec.*] 1346b3 for the "dedicated" sum, originally tithe which had grown in rent.

or to the conduct of an unsuccessful or failed sacrifice (δυσ-ιερέω[39]), but generally they exhibit semantic opposition to anything perceived as making something sacred (consecrate/dedicate) without denoting any specific actions.[40] Consecrating has many Greek equivalents such as ἱερόω, ἀφιερόω, καθιερόω, ἀνιερόω, καθοσιόομαι, "render something sacred"[41] or κατατίθημι which is also used with no obvious religious associations.[42] Also the verbs such as ὁσιόω and ἐξοσιόω tend to be read as meaning "to make an object sacred", thus co-consecrate it, and other terms imply also the physical placement of an item "up" (ἀνατίθημι) or "down" (κατατίθημι). All these imply the idea of an active ritual action of consecration.[43]

In Plato's *Euthyphro* (6e–7a) Socrates attempts to define what *hosion* is:

> Well then, what is dear to the gods is holy and what is not dear to them is unholy (ἔστι τοίνυν τὸ μὲν τοῖς θεοῖς προσφιλὲς ὅσιον, τὸ δὲ μὴ προσφιλὲς ἀνόσιον) [...] The thing and the person that are dear to the gods are holy (ὅσιος), and the thing and the person that are hateful to the gods are unholy (ἀνόσιος); and the two are not the same, but the holy and the unholy are the exact opposites of each other (τὸ ἐναντιώτατον, τὸ ὅσιον τῷ ἀνοσίῳ).

Hosion appears here clearly as being perceived as an opposite to *anosion*, but its semantic range in many others contexts is much more complex (and it is not straightforward in Plato's dialogue either). The term *anosion*, which one could expect to stand as an opposite to *hosion*, is often synonymous to *anagnon* and *anieron* meaning unsanctified, profane and hence close to the "other side" of the meaning of *hosion*. The adjective *hosios* as a qualification relates to things and behaviour which are ritually pure (close to *katharos*), pious (close to *eusebes*) or just (close to *dikaios*). When used for objects *hosios* refers to the

piety of humans using these objects or relating to them,[44] and *anosios* qualifies someone or something which simply is devoid of sanctity.[45] Yet, *hosia* was used for things that were sanctioned or permitted by divine law, and as these things were also sanctioned by human law they do not exhibit strict opposites in the continuum of sacred–profane.[46] It is noteworthy that when applied to things, sacrality or rather the *hosios* character relates to the *hosios* nature and attitude of the owner of these objects. In this view an object without a possessor is not *hosios* as such.[47] The term is semantically related to *hieron* which as a term is closest in meaning to our understanding of "sacred" or "holy", yet it is clear that *hosion* does not denote "secular" or "free for secular use" as has sometimes been proposed. A claim that the term *hosion* signifies the condition of liberation from the sacred after desecration is probably based on our tendency to operate with polar opposites when talking about sacred and profane.[48] Instead, a semantic multiplicity can be regarded as a continuum in which sacred and holy on one hand and non-sacred and unholy on the other oscillate.

Therefore, flexibility in the conceptualisation of sacredness of materiality can be regarded as a type of oscillation between and within a continuum of opposites depending on the context in which the terms are used. The *hosios* character of an object could also be understood as referring to a

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[39] This is rare, but appears e.g. in Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 63.7 for a sacrifice which failed (to show good omens).

[40] *LSJ* gives the verb σκυβλίζω (or σκυβαλίζω) to mean "to desecrate", but it is a rather late term which has connotations to defiling and excrement.

[41] Lambrinoudakis *et al.* 2005, 303 emphasise the identical nature of the terms denoting dedicated and consecrated items: "There was no substantial difference between consecration and dedication." Bodel 2009, 22 is slightly more reserved: "in practice dedication was often taken to imply consecration also." Καθιερόω and καθοσιόομαι are most often applied to consecration of an altar, a temple or another cult building, a *temenos*, *aparchai*, offerings, sacrifices, and it is only rarely used in a non-cultic context. See Paz de Hoz 1998, 163; Bodel 2009, 17–19, 21–22, 25; Jim 2014, 3–4 (for general definitions).

[42] For example, Thuc. 1.33.1 as to economic deposit and Hdt. 6.41.3 in a political sense. See also Parker 2004, 270.

[43] E.g. van der Valk 1941; Roux 1972 (in connection with Euripides' *Bacchai* 105–114, criticised by Peels 2016, 235–237, 240).

[44] Peels 2016, esp. 27–45; Blok 2010, 62 (nn. 11–12 for references). *Hosia* was discussed earlier by esp. by van der Valk 1941; Jeanmaire 1945, 66–86 (for the double meaning, esp. 67–70, for *hosie kreaon*, 78–82); see also Burkert 1985, 269–270; Parker 1983, 338; Bruit-Zaidman & Schmitt-Pantel 1992, 9; Bremmer 1998, 28, 30; Papazarkadas 2011, 9–10.

[45] *Anosion* in the meaning of impure, unsanctified unholy esp. in drama: after sacrificing Iphigeneia Agamemnon is called by the chorus in Aesch. *Ag.* 220 "impious, unholy/unclean, unsanctified" (δυσσεβής ἄναγνος ἀνίερος); Eteocles describes a seer in Aesch. *Sept.* 610–611 as a "moderate, just, noble, reverent man and a great prophet", who mixes with impious (ἀνόσιοι) men; ἀνίερος is applied together with ἀνόσιος to describe the Egyptian suitors in the *Supp.* 757 and 762 as overweening, maddened, acting with unholy rage (ἀνίερος μένος), shameless dogs that do not respect the gods (757) who have the tempers of impious beasts (762: ματαίοι ἀνόσιοί τε κνωδάλοι). See also Eur. *Tro.* 1316; Soph. *OC* 981 and *OT* 353.

[46] An often-mentioned example is *ta hosia kai ta dikaia*, "things of divine and human ordinance" esp. in Pl. *Resp.* 301d; *Leg.* 1.631b; *Grg.* 507b; *Euthphr.* 11e and 12a. The theme is much discussed, e.g. Patera 2012, esp. 40–46; Peels 2016, esp. 225–227, 242–244, 254–255. An often-given example is the permitted portion of sacrificial meat that was reserved for human consumption and termed as *hosie kre(a)on* (*Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 130).

[47] Peels 2016, 253: "An object is not *hosion* as such, but an *hosion* object is used in a way that is *hosion* by its *hosios* owner."

[48] One of the main postulates of Peels in her 2016 study on *hosios* and its cognates is that there actually is not the claimed semantic paradox in the concept and its various meanings, and that there is no need to read contrast between sacred and profane in the *hiera* and *hosia* (e.g. pp. 214, 226, 251, 255). She regards that *hosios* and its cognates primarily refer to what humans do in order to keep up and enforce their mutual relationship with gods and divine.

change in status of the item in question or in the "level" or intensity of its sacredness.[49] A characteristic example in the literature is the well-known passage in Aristophanes' *Plutus* (lines 660–683) where the playwright shows that replacing "holiness" with "unholiness" was so commonplace that poking fun on its expense was possible. Aristophanes makes the gluttonous slave Carion explain his porridge-stealing mission during the incubation at the *enkoimeterion* of the sanctuary of Asclepios. Carion sees cakes (*popana*) and preparatory offerings consecrated upon an altar (ἐπεὶ δὲ βωμῷ πόπανα καὶ προθύματα καθωσιώθη πέλανος, lines 660–661). Here the verb καθοσιόομαι is used for "consecrating" and could be regarded to refer to laying down (or putting up) the objects onto an altar as offerings.[50] Now Karion is hankering for the porridge (*chytra*) and sees the priest sweeping off both the cakes and the figs on the sacred table, then making the round of the altars (677–680) and "sanctifying" the remaining cakes (681) ... by stowing them away in his bag.[51] Here Aristophanes uses ironically the verb ἤγιζεν from ἁγίζω, "to make sacred", often translated as "consecrate" and decides how Carion follows the 'pious' (*hosios*) example of the priest and makes it straight for the porridge. The word *hosion* characterises here the irony and Aristophanes' sarcasm towards the stealing example: a sacred official (*hieros*) is doing a non-sacred or less sacred deed for which Aristophanes uses the term *hosion* in order to show its ridiculous side and the "profanity" of the act of a sacred official. Also, in the same way it could be thought that the cakes, porridge, fruits etc. were in principle sacred as far as they were in a sacred place, but their sanctity slipped in and out of sacrality depending on the acts laid upon them or who possessed them: cakes on the altar were intensively sacred, but when swept away and stolen they lost at least some of their sacredness in a priest's bag.

Sacralisation (and a supposed desecration) could therefore instead be regarded as (an inactive) change in the status of an object, and to render an object sacred was not necessarily ritualised in a grand scale.[52] Dedicating an object in a sacred place to a deity was of course an active deed of dedicating, a ritual of transferring its ownership to the gods. Thus, the context and the ownership of an object determine its sacredness, and these two are interrelated. This process is not, however,

similar to what it is to render an object "holy" or "unholy" in our modern understanding. Like sacrifice, dedicating has most often been regarded as communication with divinities via an intermediate object which is also a gift or an emblem of exchange between humans and gods,[53] and consecrating as procedure has often been placed in this complex framework of gift-exchange as a procedure which effectuates the transfer of property to deities by a recognition of its religious value and acceptance by the recipient. John Bodel regards this as a two-fold process where dedicating is a separate act of property transfer and another, namely consecration, sanctifies it.[54] However, in dedication the ownership of an object is given over to a god or a deity and this transfer of ownership thereby becomes synonym for consecrating as well as dedicating; they are inseparable. For example, after listing all the minute details about what not to wear and what to wear in the sanctuary the Andanian regulation (*CGRN* 222[55]) inscribed in 90 BC for regulating the Mysteries in Messenia states that if any woman dresses against these rules, the *gynaikonomos* is not to permit it and will inflict a punishment. The garments are to become the property of the gods (ἔστω ἱερὰ τῶν θεῶν, line 27).[56] This has often been read as "they should be consecrated to the gods", yet in the common way they are straightforwardly to become sacred property of the gods and no specific consecration ritual is implied. Items given to a deity and left in a sanctuary were perceived as automatically turning into the property of a god along with everything else inside the marked-off sacred enclosure was to be regarded property of a god and thereby sacred (*hiera* and/or *hosia*).

[49] Maffi 1982, 51–52 argues that when used in the same expression *ta hiera kai ta hosia* refer to two levels of sacrality; see also Peels 2016, 226–227.

[50] E.g. Peels 2016, ch. 6 and pp. 241–242, n. 161 who regards the verb in this passage as a possible intertextual paratragic expression, consciously meant by Aristophanes to point to Euripides' use of it in *Bacchai* where it first appeared.

[51] For the comments, see e.g. TorDoff 2012, 147–152.

[52] As to the modes of dedicating Parker 2004, 270 notes that normally there were no special rituals of dedicating except for simply bringing an item to a sacred space (and setting it in place).

[53] Bodel 2009, 18 suggests that dedications and offerings to gods should be regarded as part of a bond-creating continuum within the exchange between mortals and divinities, and not as isolated acts. For votives as a medium of communication in the Greek sanctuary contexts, see e.g. Mylonopoulos 2006, 84–90 and for differentiating between offerings, dedications and votives, Osborne 2004, 5.

[54] Bodel 2009, esp. 26–27, 30. His examples concern mainly (but not exclusively) private dedications and he does not think that the physical setting of an object is of primary importance but instead it is the conceptual placement within the framework of the rules of property that matters.

[55] The long inscription (*IG* V1, 1390¸ *LSCG* 65), dated 92/91 BC from Messenia regulates the Andanian Mysteries. Themelis 2001, 75–79 dates it to considerably later, to AD 24. For the discussion on its regulations on clothes and garments of the cult personnel, initiated, initiands and the visitors, see esp. Gawlinski 2012, 113–132; Deshours 2006 (translation, pp. 28–45, commentary 84–137); also Brøns 2017, 328-330, appendix 3, no. 1; Batten 2009, 484–485; Mills 1984, 259–260.

[56] We have parallel cases where the dedicatory act is rendered with a verb, e.g. *LSCG* 68 (*IG* V2, 514) from Lycosura (3rd century BC) states that "if one enters [the sanctuary] wearing any forbidden item, it has to be given over to the temple priest (ἀναθέτω ἐν τὸ ἱερόν lines 8–9). There is no indication here on the (future) sacred nature of the received items as the receiver is priest, not the god and the verb is ἀνατίθημι, to set up (also cultic paraphernalia) or give/leave (behind). See Mills 1984, 258–259 for punishments for a transgressor of the sacred clothing rules and the various penalties, including e.g. cleansing sanctuary space.

As noted above, demarcating space for sacred enclosures was a fundamental act that fixed sacredness to a space, land and physical terrain. But when this was done the transportable paraphernalia which were permitted to be taken in and out of the sanctuary—meat, small objects, portable votives, even building blocks of architectural structures—simply changed their status in the continuum of sacred and profane according to where they were, and importantly, whose they were without an active ritual of desecration. In a speculative scenario we could think of an example: If you bought a gift for a deity in a stall outside the sanctuary it was yours as far as you were outside of a *temenos* and an object had no sacredness, but when you took it inside of the sanctuary to demarcated sacred space where you were supposed to dedicate it to a deity, it turned into a property of a deity and hence sacred. Yet, if you for some reason took this item with you when you left the sacred enclosure, outside of a sacred space it was yours again and the level of its sacredness had changed again or even ceased.

We tend to be willing to label unchangeable roles to material objects. However, changeability, oscillating nature of sacredness and secularity should be taken into account since sacredness was not irreversible. The well-known cult regulation *CGRN* 75, the so-called Oropos Great Code is the main source of the sacrificial rules in the sanctuary of Amphiaraos in Oropos dated to 387–374 BC.[57] The hides obtained from sacrifices (δέρματα) are characterised as "sacred" in this cult regulation: "the hide of every animal sacrificed in the sanctuary is sac[red]" (τῶν δὲ θυομένων ἐν τοῖ ἱεροῖ πάντων τὸ δέρμα [ἱερ[ὸν εἶναι, lines 29–30). In this section the text describes the sacred portions from the sacrificial animals, regulates the perquisite for the priest and thence regulates the status to be granted to hides. The original specification of the hides as sacred (still partly legible) has been later erased for the part stipulating the "sacred" nature of the hide by chiselling it out.[58] This change in the status of hides from sacred (to be kept in the sanctuary as gods property) into non-sacred (which could be taken out and sold) could be due to a need to raise revenues in the sanctuary for profane use, and skins were valuable and significant parts of the benefit and profit from sacrifices. Slightly later Lykourgos systematised the arrangements for the sale of skins of animals from public sacrifices in Athens (334/3–300 BC), and this "dermatic fund" during four consecutive years was one of the treasuries used for further covering the costs of the festivals such as paying for the equipment, paraphernalia and costs of cult on the Acropolis and elsewhere in Attica.[59] The hides kept at the sanctuary at Amphiareion were thus god's property, but when they were to become part of commerce and could be sold out, they were no longer sacred. We may ask whether leather processed from the hides which originated in sacred context was regarded in a particular way because of its initial connection with sacredness.

The above mentioned Andanian rule stipulates that no woman in the sanctuary is to wear sandals unless they are made of felt or of leather or hide from a sacrificial animal (μηδὲ ὑποδήματα εἰ μὴ πίλινα ἢ δερμάτινα ἱερόθυτα, lines A1 22–23). The leather of the sandals is not *hieron*, since the original material was taken out of the sanctuary and it was therefore no longer sacred, belonging to the god, but the sandals are simply made of hides of sacrificial animals (ἱερόθυτα) and then tanned into leather. In this regard they were special, probably better-quality sandals since such leather was of high-quality in the same way as sacrificial meat discussed above. In one way the sandals can be regarded as embodying the changeability and oscillation between sacredness and profane. Unlike the usual modern understanding of sacred through contrast to non-sacred, in the Greek thought the sacred was more fluid, and it was also more present in various, changing forms. It was therefore also to be found in a type of leather, which was considered the most superior of all leathers. The material they were made of was once part of a sacrifice, a channel of communication between humans and gods and thus an integral part of a sacred realm. Such items made of material from sacrificial animals can be seen to have had a role within a larger "sacred economy", the system of exchange in which the "sacred" character of material could be allocated to it but also removed. Their functions could have been changeable and hence we can observe the oscillation of symbolic meanings attached to them.

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[57] = *IG* VII 235 (= Ziehen *LGS* II 65; *LSCG* 69). Lupu 2003, 322–323 (with text and translation and complemented with new epigraphical evidence from the sanctuary); Rhodes & Osborne 2003, no. 27, pp. 128–134; Petropoulou 1981, 41–44; 1985, 175–176. Petropoulou 1981, 58–59 and Lupu 2003, 322, 333 date the text to 387–377 BC.

[58] Petropoulou 1981, 60–63 followed by Rhodes & Osborne 2003, 132–133; also Lupu 2003, 333 and Carbon & Peels in their commentary on *CGRN* 75. For the special ritual role of hides at Amhiaraeion, see e.g. Petropoulou 1985; Georgoudi 2017, 117–118; Renberg 2017, esp. 314–315 and Pakkanen forthcoming.

[59] Income was received at least from 15 festivals and sacrifices during ten months each year between 334/3–332/1 BC amounting to (*c.*) 11744 drachmas. For the *dermatikon*, see Rosivach 1994, 48–67, 155–157 who provides a chart list (pp. 50–54) of annual sacrifices on the *dermatikon* and the surviving amounts of money received from the sales of the hides. Jameson 1988, 107–112, based on esp. *IG* II² 1496 (lines 68–92), comes up with slightly different figures. See also van Straten 1995, 178 (referring to *IG* II² 1496); Gebauer 2002, 291; Wilson 2008, 97; Mikalson 1998, 36–37, 39; Naiden 2012, 73–74.

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