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The stuff of the gods

The material aspects of religion
in ancient Greece

Edited by Matthew Haysom,
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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

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6. A room of one's own?

Exploring the *temenos* concept as divine property

Abstract

Greek gods had their allotted spaces where worship took place, designated *temenos*, “that which has been cut off”, but even if such a plot was the property of the deity and circumscribed by particular rules, it was not exclusively frequented by the divine owner. Mortal visitors may have used a *temenos* just as intensively as a god did, but in a different manner, and humans were also the caretakers and administrators of the god's property. This paper explores the *temenos* concept from the point of view of sanctuaries as set apart from gods but mainly used by men, and how immortal and mortal practices and manifestations were to be accommodated within this space. Two points will be addressed, the marking of boundaries for *temene*, and notions of purity and pollution when humans visited sanctuaries to worship the gods. It will be argued that a physical demarcation of the *temenos* was not a divine prerequisite and that the construction of a wall was a human responsibility depending on local cultic conditions. The caretaking of a *temenos* as divine property required particular rules at sacrifices, since human needs and desires were not always appropriate to the gods. Of particular interest are the handling of animals, the cooking and food consumption after sacrifices, the management of human waste as well as the impact of humans staying in *temene*.*

Keywords: *temenos*, sanctuaries, space, sacrifice, Archaic, Classical, plot of land, property, deities, worshippers

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Introduction

Greek gods had their allotted spaces where worship took place, designated *temenos*, “that which has been cut off”. Sometimes the gods actively contributed to the setting apart of this land, as Leto does for Apollo in the Homeric hymn carrying his name, but the dedication of a *temenos* to a god often seems to be a human undertaking, no different from the handing out of land at colonial endeavours, where precincts were also reserved for the gods.¹ Such pieces of land were the property of the deity and just as anything owned by someone, it was up to the owner to decide how it was to be used. And, since the owner in this case was a god, the land was circumscribed by particular rules. But a *temenos* was not exclusively frequented by the divine owner. In fact, mortal visitors may have used this space just as intensively as a god did, or perhaps even more so, though in a different manner. Humans were also the caretakers and administrators of the god's property.

My prime interest in this paper lies in the relation between the god as the owner of the *temenos* and the human worshippers as visitors and keepers of this divine property. The starting point is the fact that sanctuaries are spaces set apart for gods but mainly used by men. How did this affect how these locations were planned, built upon and equipped? Whose interests, needs and concerns were the more prominent ones in a sanctuary? It is too simple to say that the divine perspective alone directed the use of a *temenos*, nor was the presence of human worshippers the decisive factor. Instead, an intricate mix of immortal and mortal practices and manifestations, both as to quantity and quality, that had to be accommodated. I will focus on two points in particular in relation to the *temenos* as the physical property of the god: the marking of boundaries

¹ *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 87; *Pl. Leg.* 738c (cf. 738d): statues, altars and temples are to be given to the gods and for each of them a *temenos* is to be marked off.

for *temene*, and notions of purity and pollution when humans came to sanctuaries to worship the gods.

The semantic field

First a few words on terminology. The term *temenos* comes from the verb *temnô*, “to cut off or separate” and means a piece of land that has been marked off and assigned as an official domain.² In Linear B it only covers the territory of the *wanax*,³ while in Homer *temenos* is used for a defined area of a man or a god, and a sanctuary can be described as “the god’s *temenos* and fragrant *bomos*”.⁴ In the Archaic period, the connection to the gods becomes central and the term is explicitly linked to a divine plot of land and the same use prevails in Classical times. A slight widening of the semantic field takes place in the Hellenistic period when *temenos* can also be used for a funerary precinct, especially one of a scale and importance that imply some kind of hero cult.⁵

Temenos forms part of the complex terminology for divine land, such as *abaton*, an area which is not to be stepped on or entered; *sekos*, an enclosed precinct; *peribolos*, a fenced in or walled area; and the most complex one, *hieron*.⁶ *Temenos* and *hieron* have an intricate relation, as they both imply a sacred quality of the terrain. *Hieron* is broader and can designate a sanctuary more generally, but also a temple or even a part of a temple, while *temenos* is the plot of land, though the term can be used for an entire sanctuary as well.⁷

For example, a late 4th-century BC decree from Ialysos, Rhodes, dealing with the purity of the sanctuary of Elektrona, stipulates that you are not to bring forbidden items into the *hieron* and the *temenos*.⁸ In line 24, the decree mentions only the *temenos*, when regulating that horses, donkeys, mules and other equids are prohibited, as well as people wearing pigskin shoes. Central here is the actual terrain making up the *temenos* on which both animals and humans will tread, and the wrong kinds of beings stepping on this ground results in both the *hieron* and the *temenos* having to be purified. *Temenos* in the

sense of a piece of land is also found in documents regulating the leasing of the god’s property for agricultural purposes.⁹ A well-known late 5th-century BC decree from Athens for the sanctuary of Kodros, Neleus and Basile instructs that the *hieron* is to be fenced in and the *temenos* belonging to Neleus and Basile leased out.¹⁰ This plot of land cannot have been too small, as the person holding the lease is to work the *temenos* and plant at least 200 shoots of olives.

Physical boundaries or metaphysical borders?

From this brief overview we can conclude that a *temenos* was linked to the ground or rather it *was* the ground and that it had a notion of being set apart, that is, having some kind of boundary. The question is, what kind of boundary, a physical or metaphysical one, and what purpose did this boundary serve? Demarcations of cult-places are mentioned in inscriptions and texts, so we know they existed, but were there always walls? There were many ways of demarcating sacred space in ancient Greece, a physical *peribolos* wall was only one option; fences of wood or stone, boundary stones (*horoi*), *perirrhanteria* and even statues, monuments and vegetation could be used as well.¹¹ There is surprisingly little interest in scholarly literature in markers of *temenos* borders apart from *horoi*, and concrete visible *temenos* walls are often taken as a prerequisite of a Greek sanctuary. In Birgitta Bergquist’s study *The Archaic Greek temenos* from 1967, the existence of a delimited *temenos* is taken as a basic given feature, but there is little discussion of its physical manifestation at the sites she covers, neither does she comment upon any chronological or geographical variations as to the occurrence of such walls.¹² The material properties of a *temenos* therefore need to be explored, in particular, when and how it was deemed necessary to physically demarcate such a precinct, and if a physical boundary such as a wall was a divine or a human desideratum.

At some sanctuaries we do not know if there ever was a wall, as the outer limit of the site has not been excavated. In other sanctuaries the cult was up and running for a considerable period of time before it was deemed necessary to build a proper wall; even the main temple could predate the *temenos*

² LSJ s.v. *temenos* I and II; Beekes 2010, s.v. *temenos*.

³ Gérard-Rousseau 1968, 208–209; Rougemont 2005, 341.

⁴ Hom. *Il.* 6.193–195, 8.48 and 23.148; Hom. *Od.* 8.363. Cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1993, 7–11.

⁵ LSCG 135 = Laum 1914, vol. 2, no. 43 (Thera); CGRN 104 = LSAM 72 = Laum 1914, no. 117 (Halikarnassos); Blümel 1992, 157, no. 301 and Schörner 2007, 138, n. 1166 (Knidos). The term is as a rule rare in funerary contexts, cf. Kubinska 1968.

⁶ Patera 2010. For the particular terms, see also Hellmann 1992, s.v. *peribolia*; *peribolos*, *toichos*; Cole 2004, 22–25, 40, 169–172 and 330–333; Brulé 2012, *passim*, esp. 25–39 and 83–90.

⁷ Hellmann 1992, 169–172, s.v. *hieron*. For the relation *hieron-temenos*, see also Wycherley 1960, 62; Le Roy 1986, 285–286; Cole 2004, 40.

⁸ CGRN 90 = IG XII 1, 677; Chandezon 2003, no. 41; Kearns 2010, 204–206, no. 5.1.3.

⁹ For the distinction between land sacred to the gods and not to be used for agriculture, and sacred land which could, see Parker 1983, 160–161; cf. Horster 2004, 180–185; Pernin 2014, 493–494.

¹⁰ IG I³ 84 = LSCG 14.

¹¹ For the use of *horoi*, see Lalonde 1991, 5–16. Chandezon 2003, no. 31, Delos, 2nd century BC, pigs and cattle not allowed beyond the *perirrhanteria*. Cf. Hippoc. *Morb. sacr.* 1.109–110.

¹² Bergquist 1967.

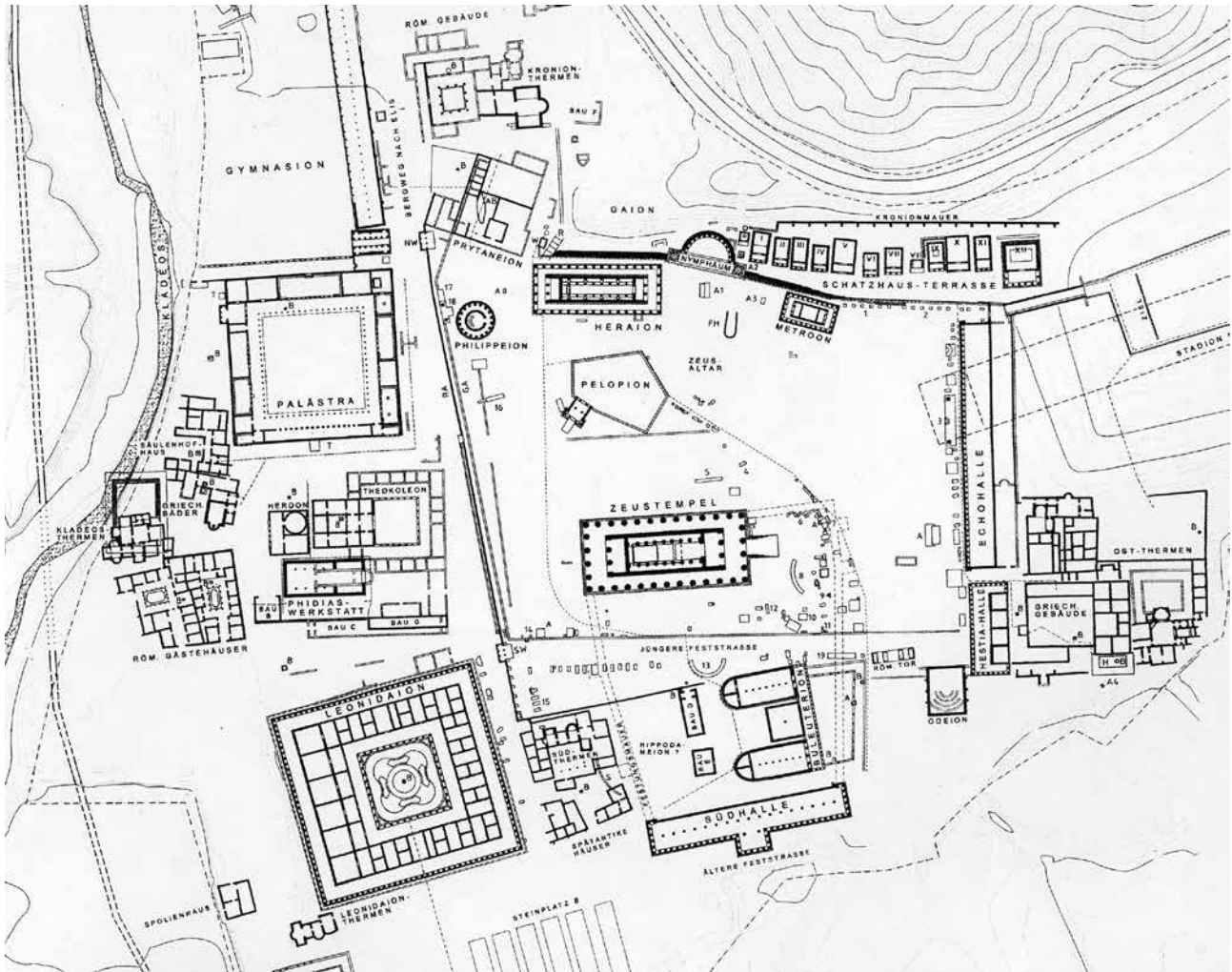


Fig. 1. Olympia in the Roman period. From H. Kyrieleis, ed., Olympia 1875–2000. 125 Jahre deutsche Ausgrabungen. Internationales Symposium, Berlin 9.–11. November 2000, Mainz am Rhein 2002, foldout map in the back of the volume.

wall up to several centuries. At Olympia, the cult was established in the middle of the 11th century BC and the earliest temple, whether dedicated to Zeus or Hera, dates to the Archaic period (Fig. 1).¹³ The Greek *peribolos* wall is not earlier than the mid-4th century BC, however, even postdating the grand temple of Zeus.¹⁴ Apparently there was no need for a proper wall for more than 500 years even though this was a major panhellenic sanctuary.¹⁵

¹³ For the beginning of the cult of Zeus at Olympia, see Kyrieleis 2006, 61–79; Mallwitz 1972, 77–84.

¹⁴ Mallwitz 1972, 121; Herrmann 2013, 20.

¹⁵ The lack of a *temenos* wall around the Altis did not preclude that some areas within were fenced off, such as the Pelopion which was equipped with a wall in the early 5th century BC, see Kyrieleis 2006, 58; Ekroth 2012, 101–103 and 111.

The opposite development is also found. The sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia had an early *temenos* wall dating to the first half of the 7th century BC, erected at the same time as the temple and the long altar (Fig. 2a).¹⁶ Interestingly, after the temple burnt in 470 BC and the sanctuary was restored, parts of the northern Archaic *temenos* wall were dismantled and the foundation trench filled in (Fig. 2b).¹⁷ The sanctuary may now only have been marked by series of *horoi* along the road to Corinth running north of the temple. The question therefore follows, why do some *temene* have walls? A number of overlapping reasons can be suggested which relate both to

¹⁶ Gebhard & Hemans 1992, 23 and 47–49; Gebhard 1993, 159 and 161; Broneer 1973, 10–11.

¹⁷ Gebhard & Hemans 1992, 23, 42 and 47–48; Gebhard 1993, 164–165.

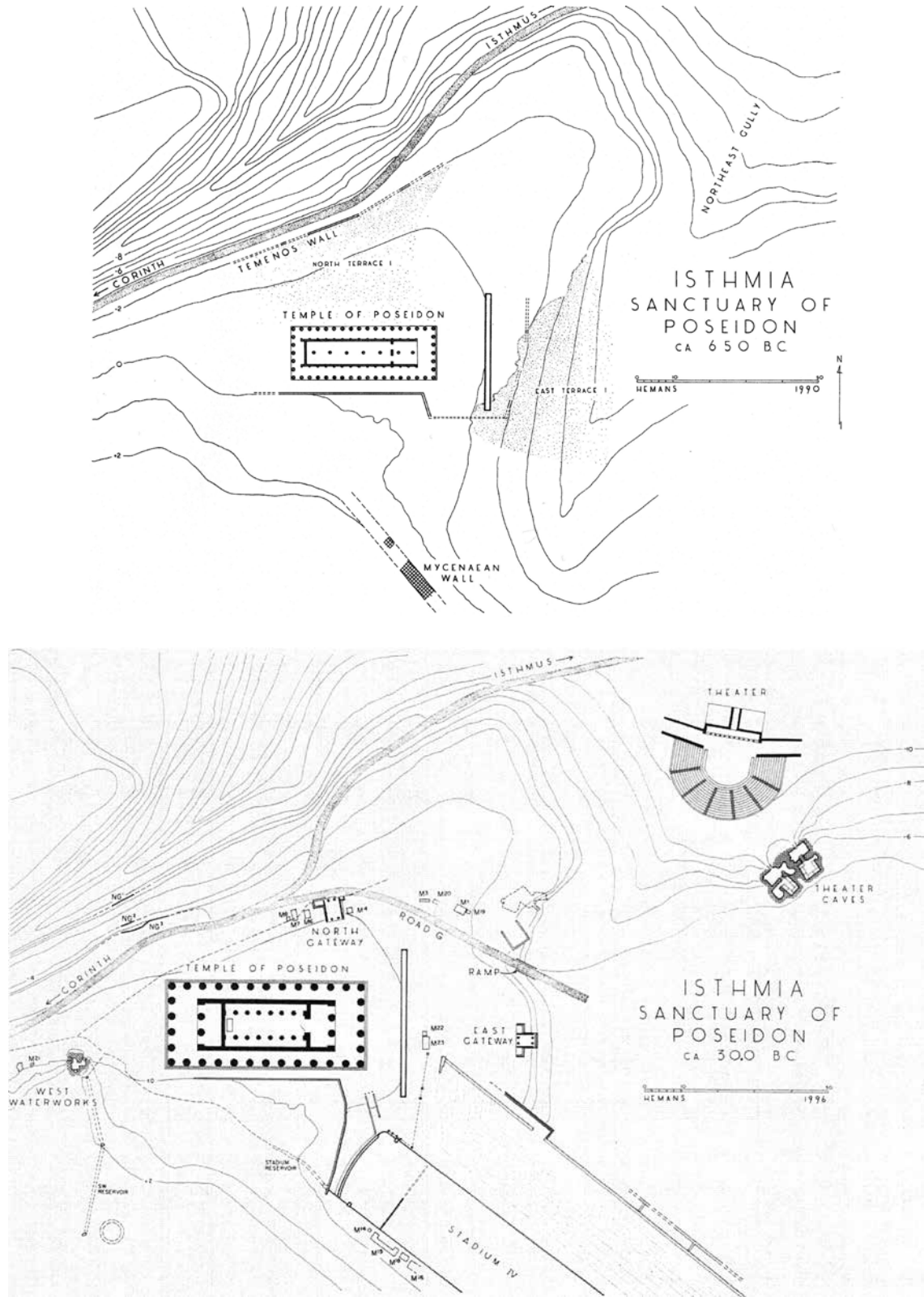


Fig. 2a and b. Isthmia, the sanctuary of Poseidon in c. 650 and 300 BC. From Gebhard & Hemans 1992, 24, fig. 5, and Gebhard & Hemans 1998, 42, fig. 18.

the religious and the practical aspects of a sanctuary, that is, both the divine and human perspectives. Of importance is the local situation, although some overriding concerns can be distinguished.

Temenos walls can be seen as conscious attempts of *monumentalization*, just as the rise of stone temples has been explained as part of the same kind of process, to make sanctuaries more grand and impressive.¹⁸ At the Argive Heraion, the fake-Mycenaean terrace, dating to the end of the 8th century BC, has been taken as representing the earliest extent of the *temenos*, but this terrace wall also provided the necessary space for cult activities and buildings, and clearly monumentalized the area as the terrace wall is visible from far away.¹⁹ The remains of the Archaic temple preserved on top of the terrace, constructed *c.* 625–600 BC, only used part of this space, and its predecessor may only have been some kind of *naiskos*, judging by the small terracotta temple model found at the site.²⁰

The Archaic *temenos* wall at Isthmia could also be seen as part of a desire to monumentalize the site towards the main road leading to Corinth, perhaps by its use for showing off arms and armour dedicated to Poseidon.²¹ At Olympia, the terrace wall south of the early 5th century BC temple of Zeus was probably erected as a landscaping measure, later to be crowned by a wall. Still, this mid-4th century BC Greek *temenos* wall was probably not more than a meter high, to be compared with the Roman *temenos* wall, which was something completely different, as it seems to have stood 3 to 4 m, a true monument in itself.²² Also the Artemision at Ephesos had a wall that towered more than 3 m in the Roman period.²³ Possibly these very substantial walls are to be seen as a later development, but that remains to be investigated.

A major reason for walls must have been to *regulate access* to the *temenos*, although this was apparently not a prerequisite at all sanctuaries and such needs varied over time, as is evident from Olympia. Certain types of cults made it necessary to control who could enter the sacred area. At Eleusis and other mystery cults, the wall prevented those not initiated or entitled to partake in the ceremonies from entering or seeing.²⁴ In many incubation cults a fee was paid before the consultation of the deity, and the wall served to keep out those not paying

as well as assuring the calm of the incubants within.²⁵ The wall around the Amyneion at Athens, a small healing cult, may have been especially needed to assure the secluded nature of the cult, since the sanctuary was located in the middle of a residential area.²⁶

Some hero-cult shrines were surrounded by walls to *prevent the wrong people from entering* and worshipping, a requirement if the cult was located in a sanctuary visited by many. On Delos, the sanctuary of the local hero Anios or Archegetes was surrounded by a wall in the 5th century BC, and above the entrance an inscription read “Foreigners are not allowed to enter”.²⁷ The 5th century BC enclosure and propylon of the Pelopion at Olympia may also have been triggered by such motifs, namely to keep foreigners out.²⁸ In a fragment of Euripides’ tragedy *Erechtheus*, Athena instructs Erechtheus’ wife Praxithea that the *temenos* where their dead daughters are to be worshipped and presumably also buried, is to be an *abaton* that the Athenians are to safeguard it so that the enemy cannot make offerings there and assure victory in battle.²⁹ A wall would have prevented the cult from being manipulated.

The *safe-keeping* of the god’s property, votives or other valuables, could call for a wall. Diodorus Siculus (5.63) remarks that the sanctuary of Hemithea at Kastabos in Caria was not plundered by the Persians even if it was un-walled (*ateichiston*). The walls around the Pelopion at Olympia and the *heroon* at Nemea could have served to safeguard the hero’s bones from being stolen, as the power of the hero resided in his bones and their removal resulted in a loss of the cult.³⁰ The walling-in also prevented more mundane misuse of *temene*, for example people staying in them unlawfully, as happened in Athens during the Peloponnesian war (Thuc. 2.17). The fencing in of the *bieron* and *temenos* of Kodros, Basile and Neleus, mentioned earlier, has been interpreted as an attempt to reorganize the situation in Athens after the war and get rid of any squatters as well as make sure that they could not return by providing the shrines with walls and leasing them.³¹

An interesting case of protecting the god’s property by a wall is the situation at the Hephaisteion at Athens on the west side of the Agora (Fig. 3). The temple was constructed in the 440s BC, but the earliest *temenos* wall dates to the early 3rd century BC, though there are some traces of a late 5th–early

¹⁸ Sourvinou-Inwood 1993, 10–11.

¹⁹ Bergquist 1967, 19–22; Wright 1982; Antonaccio 1992, 90–98.

²⁰ Antonaccio 1992, 96–98.

²¹ For armour being found in the northern part of the *temenos*, see Gebhard 1998, 102.

²² Herrmann 2013, 25; Dörpfeld 1935, 69; Mallwitz 1972, 123, at least 3.5 m high.

²³ Kirbihler & Zabranja 2014, 102. See also the Roman *temenos* at Isthmia, framed by stoas on three sides, Broneer 1973, 75–85.

²⁴ Travlos 1988, 93–98; Mylonas 1961, 91–96 and 124–125, the wall serving as a proper fortification (see also Travlos 1949).

²⁵ For fees, see von Ehrenheim 2015, 43–48.

²⁶ Körte 1893; Travlos 1971, 76–78.

²⁷ Bruneau 1970, 413–430; Butz 1996, 78–82.

²⁸ Pelops had in the Classical period become the national hero of Elis, the city state in control of Olympia, which may have created a need to reserve the cult for Elians only within this busy international sanctuary, see Ekroth 2012, 111–113.

²⁹ Eur. *Erecht.* 77–89, esp. 87–89 (Cropp 1995); cf. Ekroth 2002, 186–189.

³⁰ For heroes’ bones, see McCauley 1999.

³¹ Cole 2004, 60.

4th century BC construction.³² The reason for a proper wall around this precinct in the Hellenistic period, almost 200 years after the temple was built, can be connected to the installation of rows of potted plants and trees around the temple. The actual enclosed area is not very substantial and there is little space between the flower pots. The elaborate and highly unusual garden apparently needed to be protected, perhaps especially from the partying crowds at the Hephaisteia, and the *temenos* wall would ensure that no damage was done to the trees and bushes. Activities such as feasting must have taken place outside the *temenos* itself, presumably to the south of the temple, where the bedrock had been levelled in the late 4th century BC.³³

Finally, not only votive offerings, heroes' bones and ornamental plants were in need of a wall around the *temenos* to prevent people from getting at them; regular agricultural production also had to be protected. The presence of the wall could have been for very simple reasons: to keep those out who did not understand by themselves that they were to stay away, since they could not read the *horoi*, such as sheep, goats and other animals.

To control access for cultic motives and to protect the god's property were major reasons for *temenos* walls, but it was the conditions at the individual location and time period that occasioned such structures. From a divine point of view, a walled-in *temenos* does not seem to have been a prerequisite. Of importance was the manifestation of the *temenos* as divine space, not the marking of its borders.³⁴ It was up to mortal men to guard this boundary as they best saw fit, depending on what was inside, and sometimes this required a wall.

Purity and pollution

Let us now move inside the *temenos*, beyond the wall, if there was one, to consider my second point, namely the handling of purity and pollution of the *temenos* and what that meant in practice. Humans could and would use this divine space, though not for any purpose. *Temene* could be rented out for cultivation, an activity which did not clash with proper usage, but some rental contracts stipulate that the area had to be used as a sanctuary and that the worshippers were to have access to sacrifice.³⁵ The Hippocratic *Sacred disease* states (1.109):

We ourselves [as opposed to the gods] mark out the boundaries of temples (*hiera*) and *temene* so that no one who is not pure may cross them, and when we enter we sprinkle ourselves with water, not because we are polluted, but so that we purify any previous uncleanness we may have had.³⁶

To mark and safeguard divine property was clearly a human responsibility, but also to keep the *temenos* pure. Interestingly, the gods themselves apparently did not have this power. Even if gods could not be polluted by men, humans could certainly pollute their *temene*.³⁷

We are dealing with different kinds of pollution here, both immaterial and material, from a taint caused by certain actions and which cannot be seen, to actual physical impurities lying around the precinct but also damage to the god's property. Some actions giving rise to impurity took place outside the *temenos* and were brought into it with the visitors, while others would arise inside the area. We may distinguish between pollution which happens before you enter the *temenos*, which in fact can be avoided, and actions inside the *temenos* related to the actual cult.

The foremost types of pollution to be kept away from a *temenos* were death, birth and sex.³⁸ Preventions against such impurities and actions of how to get rid of them abound in sacred laws and literary texts.³⁹ The gravity of deaths in sanctuaries is evident from the elaborate and expensive purifications that took place on Delos after a human corpse had been found and removed from a sanctuary. A bull, a ram and a boar, three unusual and costly animals, were burnt as a purification on a huge and expensive pyre.⁴⁰

Not even sanctuaries of Asklepios dared to accommodate the very sick or those about to give birth, and according to Pausanias, a special building was constructed outside the *hieron* of Asklepios at Epidauros to house pregnant women and the terminally ill, while the Asklepieion on Delos was located on a promontory facilitating the evacuation of the dying from the sacred island to Rheneia.⁴¹ Sex is less clearly banned and it is rather the precautions you have to undertake after having

³² Thompson 1937, 396–411; Travlos 1971, 261 and fig. 336.

³³ Thompson 1937, 398.

³⁴ When gods demand to be worshipped, they usually require temples and altars, not *temene*, see *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 270; *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 287 and 482.

³⁵ *IG II² 2502*: the *hieron* and *temenos* of Hypodektes are leased but have to be used as sacred (*hieron*) by the person renting the precinct. See also Dillon 1997, 116–118; Papazarkadas 2011, 75–98 and 191–197; Hor-

ster 2004, 180–185; Pernin 2014, 493–494. Land belonging to gods was however not inalienable, see Rousset 2013.

³⁶ Translation Kearns 2010, 210–211, no. 5.1.9.

³⁷ See Ekroth 2002, 222–223; Parker 1983, 144–146; Johnston 1999, 53–54.

³⁸ Parker 1983, 32–103; see also Finn 2009, 14–17.

³⁹ A definitive ban on birth and death is found in *IG II² 1035*, late 1st century BC, for the date, see Schmalz 2007–2008, 15–16.

⁴⁰ *IG XI.2 199 A 70*; Clinton 2005, 172.

⁴¹ Paus. 2.27.1 and 6; Bruneau 1970, 372–373. Cf. Thuc. 3.104: after the purification of Delos, conditions became even stricter and those dying and women about to give birth had to leave the island for Rheneia. On the particular purity regulations on Delos, see also Prêtre 2018.

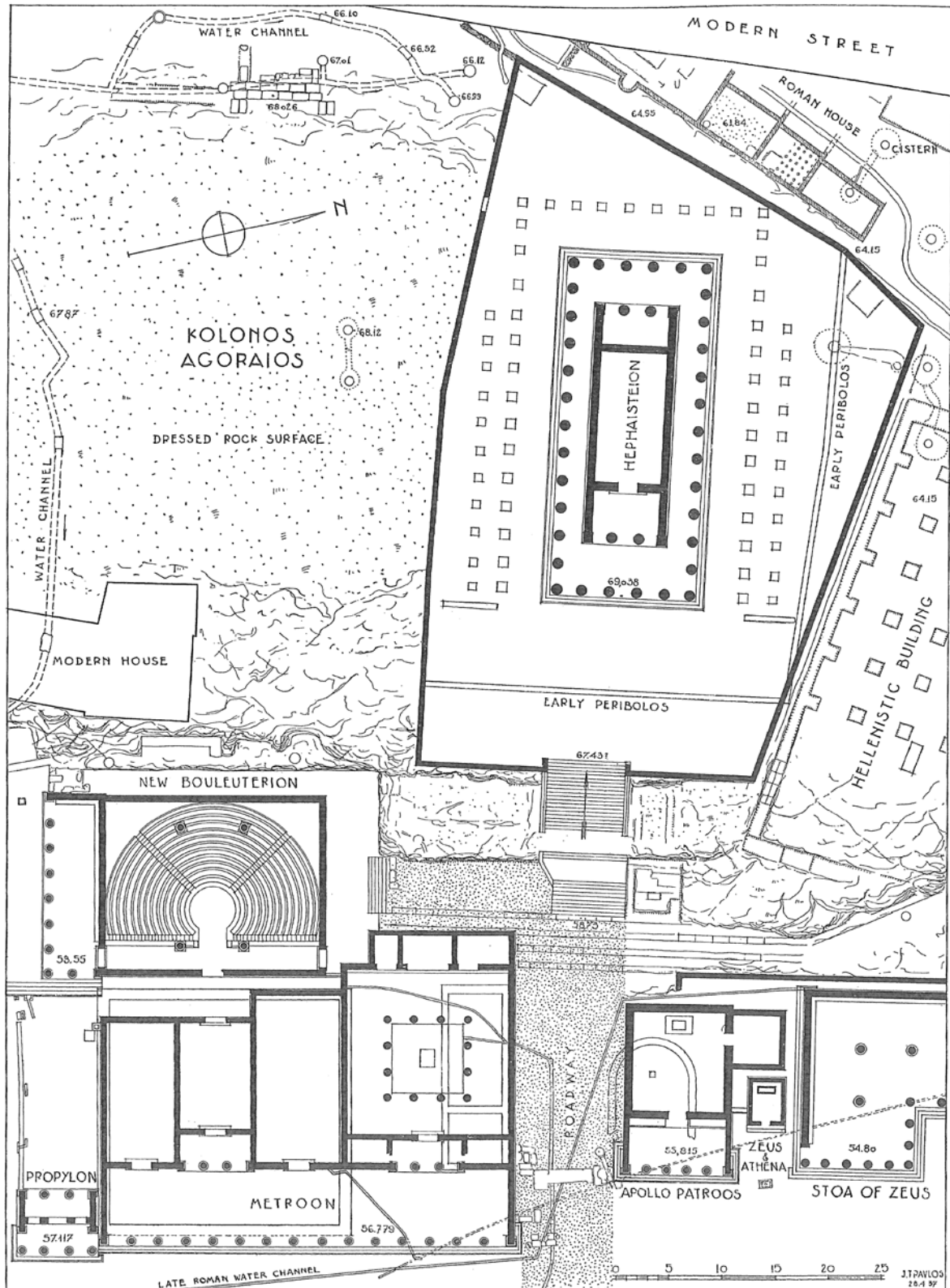


Fig. 3. The Hephaisteion, Athens, in the 3rd century BC. After Thompson 1937, 397, fig. 1.

had sex that show that this was a non-desired activity.⁴² On the other hand, the reactions to how Demetrios Poliorketes kept a veritable harem in the *opisthodomos* of the Parthenon, both *hetairai* and virgins, clearly show that this was an undesired activity.⁴³

Apart from these major concerns, individual sanctuaries had a number of rules stipulating conditions of purity, for example abstaining from certain kinds of food, prohibitions on bringing in specific objects and materials, items of clothing and jewellery or animal species. Some of these regard preventing what the gods did not like, such as pigskin shoes in the decree of Alektryona on Rhodes, or worshippers who were of the wrong kind, such as foreigners at the Archegeion on Delos. Transgression of these rules led to impurity, divine anger and finally purifications. However, none of these things really *had* to occur in the sanctuary, they could be all avoided if the proper rules were respected before entering. Also, these kinds of actions did not affect the physical environment of the *temenos*. We can here distinguish between the god disapproving of human behaviour and of how his property was handled.

My foremost interest lies in the *temenos* as a physical part of divine property and the effects human visits to sanctuaries had when they came there to worship the gods. The main complication seems to have been that human existence was not entirely compatible with divine space, since humans needed and wanted to do things not appropriate to gods, which may lead them to use the *temenos* in an improper way. The last part of my paper will focus on the impact of the human cult activities on the *temenos*, from the perspective of animal sacrifice, *thysia*. What potential disturbances of divine property could this cult activity cause that needed to be regulated?

Sacrificial victims and other animals. Animals were the central element of sacrificial ritual, but their presence in sanctuaries was far from uncomplicated. Apart from prohibitions of bringing the wrong kinds of animals, pigs or goats are the main targets, a number of regulations aim at preventing damage to the god's property, in particular vegetation.⁴⁴ Animals are not to be grazed in the *temene* since they will eat all the grass, bushes and trees, and may even be confiscated by the god if they enter, as was the case of Zeus Temenites on 4th century BC Amorgos, who would consecrate, that is make sacred, any sheep straying into his compound.⁴⁵ It is sometimes difficult to distinguish which animals are referred to in these inscriptions, sacrificial animals, flocks owned by the locals or animals used for worshippers' travel to the sanctuary. Trans-

port animals may have been a larger problem than previously realized, and considering the size of some religious festivals the preservation of the vegetation of the sanctuary could have lain behind the prohibition of letting horses, donkeys, mules and other equids enter the *temenos* of Elektrona on Rhodes.

The restraining of sacrificial victims in sanctuaries also seems to have been a necessity, after all the Bouphonia ritual at the Dipoleia at Athens had its origin in an ox straying into a sanctuary and eating cakes from the altar.⁴⁶ Rings for fastening the sacrificial animals have been found in a number of sanctuaries, a necessity for the animals not to cause havoc, especially after the killing had begun and the victims still alive smelled the blood.⁴⁷ The peaceful, willing victim waiting patiently next to the altar as depicted on vases and reliefs was apparently wishful thinking and reality must have been substantially more noisy and messy leading to the animals having to be attached and restrained.⁴⁸

The filth animals generate, both dung and stomach contents, had to be taken care of and many sanctuary regulations deal with highly concrete aspects of dirt and pollution. The tantalizing and fragmentary Hekatompedon inscription from the Athenian Acropolis states that the bowel and stomach contents of the sacrificial animals, *onthos*, could not be disposed of anywhere, and that intestines of the sacrificial victims could not be cleaned out beside the Hekatompedon.⁴⁹ Dumping of *kopros*, dung, in sanctuaries could apparently be a problem.⁵⁰ A particularly clear case is a late-3rd-century BC regulation from Delos proclaiming that no-one is to discard dung, ash or anything else within the newly cleaned areas belonging to Dionysos and Leto.⁵¹ In many instances the *kopros* must have come from sacrificial victims, but also from other animals, such as the pigeons on Delos, whose guano was collected and sold,⁵² but perhaps also from the human visitors (see below).

Sacrifice. After the killing of the animal, the god's share was burnt on the altar, while the rest of the meat was butchered, prepared and consumed, activities that leave concrete remains in the form of animal bones. Zooarchaeological material from Greek sanctuaries demonstrates that the bones from the ac-

⁴² For a general interdiction, see Hdt. 2.64.

⁴³ Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 23.3–24.1.

⁴⁴ For an overview, see Brulé 2012, 123–159; Chandezon 2003, 163–164 and 297. On the protection of the vegetation in sanctuaries, see also Dillon 1997, 114–122; Horster 2015, 172–183.

⁴⁵ IG XII, 7 62, 35–37.

⁴⁶ For the sources, see Deubner 1932, 158–174.

⁴⁷ For a review of the evidence, see Fourrier & Hermay 2006, 181–186; Ekroth 2022, 162–163.

⁴⁸ Georgoudi 2005; Naiden 2007.

⁴⁹ IG I³ 4, B, 8–11; Németh 1994, 62–63.

⁵⁰ *Kopros* removed from sanctuaries on Delos, see IG XI, 2 146, 76–77 and IG XI, 2 203, 38. IG XII, 8 265, the tenant of the garden of Herakles on Thasos has to remove any *kopros* thrown into the area (see Horster 2004, 178–179). For *kopros*, see also Dillon 1997, 125–127.

⁵¹ LSS 53, 3–30: free men doing so would be fined while slaves would be whipped.

⁵² Dove guano: IG XI, 2 135, 142, 144, 158, 161, 162 and 287; Bruneau 1970, 420.

tual sacrificial actions (thighbones and tails burnt on the altar) are often recovered at, in or near the altar or may even be left to form the altar itself.⁵³ Regulations do not specify that this sacrificial debris was to be cleared away and the burnt bones were rather perceived as part of the god's property, just as the entire animal initially had been consecrated to the gods, and keeping them at the altar also commemorated the successful communication with the divine sphere. Sometimes the amount of material is staggering, such as the huge ash altar of Zeus Lykaïos on Mt Lykaion in Arcadia, 30 m in diameter and 1.5 m high.⁵⁴ Some altars even "drowned" in their own sacrificial debris, like the field stone altar at the *Aire sacrificielle* at Eretria and Altar U at Kommos, which contained more than 40 kg of burnt bones.⁵⁵

Dining. When the god's portion had been burnt and the fire on the altar extinguished, the meat was to be eaten. Dining would have an impact on the god's space, since it required a particular location, be it a permanent building or an open field used temporarily, installations for preparing the food and equipment for eating it.⁵⁶ The meal can be seen as an integrated part of the sacrifice, still it is doubtful to what extent men eating after a sacrifice was an activity that the gods cared about. Although dining facilities are found in many sanctuaries, dining inside the *temenos* was not always a given fact. The size of *temene* vary greatly and, in some cases, there seems only to have been room for the god and his or her property and needs, which left little space for the human worshippers.

In some sanctuaries, such as Brauron, the structures for dining dominate.⁵⁷ At the Hephaisteion at Athens, the wall kept the diners outside the garden in the *temenos* and also at Olympia the meals seem to have taken place either to the west of the Altis, towards the Kladeios, or the east, where a large number of temporary wells from the Archaic period have been found.⁵⁸ Also Pindar remarks that when Herakles measured out the sanctuary for his father Zeus, he enclosed the Altis and marked it off, and made the area around a place for feasting (*Ol.* 10.45).⁵⁹ At Isthmia, in the Early Iron Age, dining took place near the altar, inside the *temenos*, but was moved to the southwest outside the *temenos* in the Archaic

period, where a former reservoir was used for dumping both bones and pottery.⁶⁰

One would expect that bones deriving from the meals of the worshippers were cleared away outside the *temenos* as a rule, but there are instances where these leftovers were deposited inside the sanctuary, often together with pottery, miniatures and various kinds of votives.⁶¹ In the Zeus Meilichios sanctuary at Selinous in Sicily, a series of deposits from the 7th and 6th centuries BC of burnt animal bones, figurines, lamps and pottery were even surrounded by stones and possibly crowned by uninscribed *stelai*, each deposit probably representing a cooking site for an individual or a group of worshippers commemorated in this manner.⁶² The bones from the worshippers' meals may have retained some degree of being divine property as well and were therefore left in the *temenos*, but could also have been seen as a token of successful communication with the gods, just as was the case with the sacrificial debris from the altars.⁶³

But dining can cause other potential problems for the upkeep of the god's *temenos*. Cooking fires could have been an additional reason for locating the meals outside the sanctuary proper. There are bans on the use of fire in some sanctuaries, presumably due to the danger of causing destruction but also making the buildings dirty from soot and ash. The fragmentary Hekatompedon inscription is anxious about the use of fire on the Athenian Acropolis, while in the portico on the terrace of Attalos I in Delphi fire was not to be lit.⁶⁴

Some of the *kopros* mentioned in regulations dealing with the purity of sanctuaries may have had human origin. The handling of human waste, excrements and urine, must have been an issue at festivals. Plutarch, for example, states "one is to avoid urinating against the altar or the god's building", a declaration which indicates that people could be prone to do so even inside *temene*, while the new *lex sacra* from Marmarini commands that urination in the stoa requires a purification.⁶⁵ Latrines are not found in Greek sanctuaries before the Roman period, and worshippers presumably had to leave the *temenos* or resort to chamber pots.⁶⁶ The Rhodians even asked an ora-

⁵³ See Ekroth 2017, 37–43.

⁵⁴ Starkovich *et al.* 2013; Romano & Voyatzis 2014.

⁵⁵ Eretria: Huber 2003, 31–32, 109–114, 136–140 and 146–149; Studer & Chenal-Velarde 2003, 175–184. Kommos: Reese 2000, 422, table 6.1, 441, table 6.2; Shaw 2000, 670–673.

⁵⁶ On dining space, see Goldstein 1978; Sinn 1992.

⁵⁷ Travlos 1988, 55–57 and fig. 61; Mylonopoulos & Bubenheimer 1996.

⁵⁸ These wells were filled with cooking pottery and animal bones and apparently used as "garbage cans", see Mallwitz 1999, 188–199; Gauer 1975.

⁵⁹ Distribution of the meat at Olympia seems, however, to have taken place inside the Altis, near the Pelopion, if we judge from the number of weights that have been found precisely in this region, see Ekroth 2012, 108–111.

⁶⁰ Gebhard 1993, 156–158; Gebhard & Reese 2005, 126–127 and 130–132.

⁶¹ Ekroth 2017, 43–47.

⁶² Bergquist 1992.

⁶³ A new inscription from an Artemis sanctuary at Aitolia (Moschos & Portelanos 2011, 141–142 and 180, fig. 30) proclaims that bones are not to be disposed of in the sanctuary, probably referring to the bones left over when the animal was butchered, see Ekroth 2017, 48.

⁶⁴ Hekatompedon inscription: *IG* I³ 4, B, 4–8; Jordan 1979, 103–116. Delphi: *LSS* 43, 3.

⁶⁵ Plut. *De stoicorum repugnantiis* 22; *CGRN* 225, B 81–82; Decourt & Tziaphalias 2015, 20, B 81–82.

⁶⁶ For the archaeological evidence, see Gräzer *et al.* 2011, 25–39. For ceramic chamber pots, *amis* or *ourane*, see Sparkes & Talcott 1958, fig. 22. For pisspots being thrown at drunken dining, see Ath. 1.17c–e (Aischylos fr. 180; Sophokles fr. 565; Eupolis fr. 385).

cle what kinds of chamber pots, bronze or clay, they were to bring for the banquets when they sacrificed to Athena.⁶⁷ The god's answer: Neither!

An ordinary sacrifice and the following meal cannot have been a too lengthy affair but some festivals and particular cults entailed that people travelled there for a longer period of time. Staying inside the *temenos*, especially in the stoas, was regulated, since this could cause problems, both risks of fire and a general messiness. At Chalcedon, the priest of Asklepios was to keep the porticos clean and here we may imagine that it is the waste from the incubants that had to be taken care of.⁶⁸

Living in sanctuaries seems to have been discouraged, as is the case in a mid-4th century BC decree from a sanctuary of Dionysos at Knidos, which explicitly prohibits people from staying in the *hieron* (LSAM 55). Long-time residence in a *temenos* could lead not only to human waste and fires, but also to sex, and perhaps even birth and death. A well-known example in Thukydides (4.97) are the Athenians who had fortified the Delion in Boiotia and now lived there, using it and doing there what men do in a profane place, *en bebeloi* (we may just suspect what kinds of bodily needs that covers). They were even drawing water that was to be reserved for the *chernips* in connection with the sacrifices, Thukydides comments. Management of the water resources in *temene* was definitely an issue and water could not always be used by men and gods in the same way. Keeping the water sources clean was a prerogative, both from outside threats, like the prohibition to soak hides upstream from the sanctuary of Herakles at the Ilissos river at Athens and the offering of sacrificial cakes into springs too enthusiastically, since this would destroy them as drinking water.⁶⁹

Plato in the *Laws* speaks of the examiners as residing in the *temenos* of Helios and Apollo as long as they are holding office, but it is difficult to know to what extent this at all reflects reality.⁷⁰ The question is to what extent religious personnel would actually live in the *temenos* and not just outside it. The difficulty of human presence is evident also from Thukydides' worry of how the influx of people to Athens during the Peloponnesian War had led them to occupy even sanctuaries and hero-shrines.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Diogenian. 8.4; Wächter 1910, 134.

⁶⁸ LSAM 5, 24–26. For long time residence in healing sanctuaries, especially in the Roman period, see von Ehrenheim 2015, 199–200. The impact of incubants on *temene* is an interesting problem that deserves more attention. For the cleaning of and in sanctuaries, see also the interesting discussion in Horster 2019, 208–214.

⁶⁹ LSS 4; Cole 2004, 35, n. 20.

⁷⁰ Pl. *Leg.* 945c and 946d. The so-called “priestly houses” identified in some sanctuaries need to be considered as well.

⁷¹ Thuc. 2.17: occupying all *hiera kai heroa* apart from the Acropolis, the Eleusinion and other sanctuaries that always were closed.

Concluding remarks

The delimitation of divine space varied greatly between locations and periods, as well as the character of the cult, but a physical *temenos* border was never a prerequisite for a sanctuary. Moreover, a *temenos* wall seems to have been a human concern more than a divine one. The god did apparently not need a proper wall, this was a responsibility for the humans taking care of the god's property and cult in the correct way.

Once inside the *temenos* there were also obligations for the human visitors. Men could use the sanctuaries of gods, but only to a certain extent and there is a constant policing to prevent transgressions. The agricultural use of a *temenos* for economical purposes did not usually interfere with the sacred status of this land. When coming to a sanctuary to sacrifice, eating and drinking was acceptable in most cases, but sometimes the god's *temenos* did not accommodate the worshippers' meals, as it was too small and reserved for the god's own belongings and needs. Inside the sanctuary, the mortal visitors could not use all water freely, fire had to be restricted, sleeping there was kept to a minimum and only for particular purposes, and the animals brought by the worshippers had to be controlled, regardless of whether they were for transport or to be sacrificed. Toilets in the *temenos* do not seem like an option. In fact, the worshippers were to behave as any guest would, respectfully, following the instructions, tidying up and keeping the place clean, in order not to offend the host or damage his property. After all, Greek gods liked beautiful things, *agalmata*, and among these we should definitely include the beautifully and appropriately kept *temenos*.

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