

or explained. Because these not-fully-explainable concepts remained mysterious, they became catchy and were disseminated widely, transforming to cultural concepts.

The wide-reaching material of this collection undeniably offers credible insights and a wealth of cognitive observations. The volume lacks an epilogue synthesising the new insights, especially for themes explored across a number of papers (e.g. epiphany or altered state of consciousness), and explicating the claim of putting forward a new methodological approach. The volume's division into five sections ('Ritual', 'Representation', 'Gender', 'Materiality' and 'Texts') is not successful in unifying common themes, as some themes are explored beyond these sections. Perhaps a few jointly authored papers would showcase the project's prolific interdisciplinary dialogues and its aim for a rigorous interdisciplinary methodology. These minor shortcomings do not, however, detract from the engaging contribution of the volume to the cognitive study of ancient Greek religion.

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DIVINATION FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

FRIGERIO (G.) *A Cognitive Analysis of the Main Apolline Divinatory Practices. Decoding Divination*. Pp. xii + 198, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2023. Cased, £120, US\$160. ISBN: 978-1-032-41152-1.

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Cognitive approaches to the ancient world, and in particular to ancient religion, that is the application of theories and methods from experimental psychology and neuroscience as well as from certain areas of anthropology and evolutionary biology, have become increasingly dominant in the field. At their best these approaches can offer important new insights into the significance of ancient ritual practices and beliefs. However, too often the nature of the ancient evidence makes it difficult to do more than hint at what a cognitive approach might reveal to us, if only we could be confident that we knew what these ancient rituals involved.

Divination has been examined from a cognitive perspective before (see e.g. some of the contributions to L.G. Driediger-Murphy and E. Eidinow [edd.], *Ancient Divination and Experience* [2019]), but this is the first monograph focused on Apolline divination from a cognitive perspective. While it has high ambitions, it is rather let down by its variability of scholarship. After a short introduction, Chapter 1 explains briefly the various cognitive terms that F. uses in the book: 'The brain as a prediction engine and Bayesian inferences', 'The extended mind', 'Hyperactive agency detection device (HADD)', 'Theory of Mind (ToM)', 'Ritualised actions', 'Counterintuitive concepts', 'Intuitive and reflective beliefs', 'Whitehouse's modes of religiosity' and 'Material agency'. This is something of a ragbag, and some of these terms receive rather longer discussion than others, but, overall, they are clearly explained. The bulk of the book is made up of three sections, focused on 'Landscape', 'Architecture' and 'Material Culture and the Prophets of Apollo'. Each of these sections has two chapters, the first devoted to Delphi, and the second to Claros

and Didyma. The sequence is intended to lead readers, like pilgrims, towards the sanctuary, through it to the temple building and finally to the ritual of consultation itself. The book ends with a substantial conclusion, which summarises the arguments presented in the earlier chapters.

The chapters that look at Claros and Didyma (3, 5 and 7) are generally more convincing than those that examine Delphi. This is probably because far less has been published about these sites, and more of what has been published is recent. The sites also have a shorter relevant history (little remains at Didyma from the archaic period, and the oracle at Claros only began to function in the Hellenistic period). The two sanctuaries exist in a largely artificial environment, and although the architecture of their temples is complex, its shape is relatively clear. Thus, attempts to understand the sensory effects of the sites, the way in which the buildings shape the experience of the visitor, have a reasonably good chance of being accurate. It is rather more difficult to reconstruct the rituals at these sites than it is for Delphi, but F. plausibly suggests that at Didyma at least these are likely to have been modelled on contemporary practice at Delphi. That said, the concluding discussion of Apolline divination in Asia Minor is marred by some outdated and confusing generalisations: 'In the Hellenistic age, the concept of Olympian gods became inadequate, while the model of chance and fortune started to arise, with a consequent growing scepticism towards mythology registered' (p. 151).

The chapters on Delphi (2, 4 and 6) are less satisfactory. The wealth of evidence and the long history of competing theories about what happened there prove too much for F. to make good sense of. Particularly disappointing is the discussion of the temple building itself. Missing from the bibliography is the official publication of the excavations of the temple (P. Amandry and E. Hansen, *Fouilles de Delphes II. Topographie et architecture 14. Le temple d'Apollon du IV^e siècle*. 3 vols [2010]). Instead, F. puts much weight on the description of the building in an article by J.H. Middleton, which according to endnotes and bibliography was published in 1988. Unfortunately, this is actually an article from *Journal of Hellenic Studies* published in 1888, before the French archaeological excavations at the site had begun. Middleton relied on Pausanias for his understanding of the sequence of temples, and so F., following him, pays too much attention to the mythical 'early temples' and shows no awareness that the current remains are of the fourth-century building, not the late sixth-century one. This is not the only problem. Although F. is aware that there is scholarly debate about what exactly happened during a consultation, the different views are not seriously discussed. Nor is there any attempt to provide a reconstruction of the sequence of events of a consultation. This makes it difficult to understand how the buildings and the objects within the temple would have impacted on the experience of the enquirer or the Pythia. At the end of Chapter 6, after discussing the various objects in the *adyton* of the temple, namely the *omphalos*, the tripod, the laurel, Dionysus' tomb and Apollo's statue, F. suddenly returns to theory, introducing 'Event segmentation theory' and 'the absorption hypothesis and the metaplasticity of the brain'. The final discussion is more about justifying the claim that objects have agency than about what these objects did. Leaving aside the unsatisfactory discussion of the temple building, it is not obvious that F. has a clear vision of what actually happened at a consultation of the oracle at Delphi, and, as a result, readers are left in the dark.

At the end of the conclusions, which round off the volume, F. claims, 'Independently from the case studies, the methodology applied here represents an innovation and renovation in the field of Classical Archaeology and forms a further contribution to the still-developing field of cognitive archaeology' (p. 168). This is not without some truth,

and perhaps this volume will inspire someone to write a more convincing cognitive account of Delphic divination.

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STUDIES OF ROMAN PHILOSOPHY

GARANI (M.), KONSTAN (D.), REYDAMS-SCHILS (G.) (edd.)
The Oxford Handbook of Roman Philosophy. Pp. xviii + 625.
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Two conditions endow the study of Roman philosophy with historiographical interest. The first is that the philosophical conversations of the Hellenistic traditions carry on into the Roman period, which in the eyes of the historian of philosophy starts as early as the middle of the second century BCE and may extend to include any number of Christian philosophers (e.g. Boethius or, at least, Augustine). The second is that the Mediterranean and its political orders radically changed over this same period, from Rome's expansion of *imperium* after the Second Punic War to the evolving imperial landscapes of late antiquity. The return of Platonism and the emergence of Christian philosophy are dramatic examples of how Hellenistic philosophy did not simply proceed, business as usual, in the Roman Mediterranean. Historians of philosophy have responded to this interplay of continuity and disruption in two ways. One is to track distinctive changes in philosophical discourse. From this perspective, the Roman context matters insofar as it affected a transfer of philosophical authority from scholars in Athens onto portable classical texts. This textual translation of authority defines the border between Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic philosophy, and for these categories readers will look forward to the forthcoming *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenistic Philosophy* and the planned *The Cambridge History of Post-Hellenistic Philosophy*.

The other route is to measure how Roman power changed philosophy throughout the period of their interaction, and not only with respect to disciplinary trends. While Roman philosophy is rarely defined, its historiography has clear work to do: to study how realities of Roman rule (politics, the Latin language, literary developments, social and cultural norms, the law, et al.) shaped philosophical discourse. Though the editors' preface is extraordinarily brief for a handbook that is the first of its kind, *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Philosophy* takes itself, partly, to do the work of the history of Roman philosophy. Rather than presenting comprehensive or connected narratives, the 34 chapters examine philosophy in the Roman Mediterranean from manifold angles, as diverse in scope and kind as the operations of Roman power itself. Accordingly, readers should not expect exhaustive coverage of possible subjects. There are no chapters that give sustained attention to, say, Antiochus, Varro, Favorinus or Sextus Empiricus. Further, each of the volume's four parts serves a variety of purposes, so that readers should rely not on the categorisation of the volume's four parts but rather on the titles of individual chapters for guidance. For instance, since A. Kaldellis's chapter in Part 4 is part of his