

material, while highlighting the urgent need to re-evaluate storerooms for similarly understudied assemblages. Together, Flouda and colleagues present a comprehensive site report that scholars of the Aegean Bronze Age will certainly value for its content, methodology and cohesive organisation.

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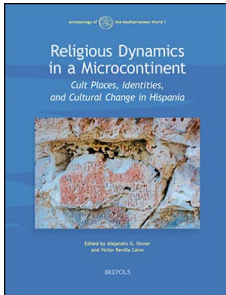
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ALEJANDRO G. SINNER & VÍCTOR REVILLA CALVO (ed.). 2022. *Religious dynamics in a microcontinent: cult places, identities and cultural change in Hispania* (Archaeology of the Mediterranean World, vol. 1). Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-59545-0 paperback €110.



The book *Religious dynamics in a microcontinent: cult places, identities and cultural change in Hispania* presents an in-depth review of religion in the rural Roman world in Hispania. It also addresses the importance of urban cults and other forms of religiosity carried out by urban institutions, such as the minting of coins or the celebration of the imperial family cult.

Compiled by Alejandro Sinner and Víctor Revilla Calvo, this volume is divided into two well-organised sections, preceded by a thorough Introduction. The Introduction explains the philosophy behind this editorial project and the theoretical framework that underpinned the selection of chapters and the organisation of the sections. The theoretical content is based on post-colonialism views, with the clear aim of highlighting the role of the diverse indigenous populations of the Iberian Peninsula. This approach of contrasting different ideas of indigenism in the region will be welcomed by many: from those who think that a Celtic and Iberian container is enough to explain the pre-Roman diversity of south–north and east–west; to those who stress the subtle differences both in local identity, ethnogenesis and overall a very diverse social organisation that was encountered by the Roman Republican or Imperial state in the two centuries that it took to effectively complete the conquest of the peninsula. This type of approach has been popular in studies of Greek and Punic expansion in the Mediterranean and on the Iberian Levantine coast, but its application to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods is now necessary. The Introduction also makes a

statement about being inclusive to the wider public, either specialised or simply interested in the subject at graduate and undergraduate level. After reading the theoretical and data-laden essays, however, the book seems aimed more at scholars with a genuine interest in the study of religious agency in the formation of rural and civic communities. In any case, the book is a worthwhile and stimulating read.

Part I 'Rituals in context' consists of six chapters that explore different elements of religious rituals or places where rituals once took place, in both rural and urban contexts. Ignasi Grau Mira presents in Chapter 2 the material evidence from the sanctuary of La Serreta and relates those specific and well-known places of worship to other sacred spaces in the Iberian world. The point of this contribution is to rebel against the idea of a dualistic perspective of passive natives and Roman agency, and to stress the notion of selective practices and the integration of local traditions in the rituals, which is an idea that contrasts with the established epistemology of Romanisation. Chapter 3, by Thomas Schattner, aims to establish a typological order of ancient sanctuaries in pre-Roman and Roman western Hispania. This typology ranges from walled temples to stone circles and pillars and includes other evidence, such as certain tableware and lamps, that could archaeologically indicate the presence of ritual spaces. However, the author overlooked open-air sanctuaries with seats, a type of sacred space that is currently being studied, but that needs to be further examined in the light of archaeological evidence (i.e. Gete, Peñas de los Berruecos, Burgos). In this vein, Marc Mayer Olivé deals in Chapter 4 with rock sanctuaries and caves and the epigraphic sources associated with them. The corpus of data is exhaustive and leads the author to stress the importance of the superimposition of cults, even in those cases where this decisive indigenous influence is not traceable. The two editors also wrote Chapter 5, in which they study religious practices and rural cult sites in Hispania *Citerior*. They analyse different layers of complexity while bearing in mind the bias of the archaeological records. These intertwined spheres of analyses are presented without a typological approach, unlike in Chapter 3. That chapter covers the actual scenarios of rural cults, chronological issues, the civil communities involved in cults and practices, the self-representation of elites in such cults and the interesting case of Panoias and, finally, the role of sacred spaces as places of interaction and communication between peoples of different social classes and origins. In Chapter 6, Jonathan Edmonson presents his view of local cults in Roman colonies, using as a case study Augusta Emerita, the capital of Lusitania; it explains the important epigraphic record of both the city and its wider countryside. Edmonson delivers a synthetic view that is often lacking in the knowledge of archaeologists focused only on the material records and provides extensive supplementary material to support his thesis. In the final chapter of Part I, María Pérez Ruiz investigates private beliefs and domestic religion from the Iron Age through to the Roman periods. Her conclusions, although brief, point to the interesting notion of hybridism and the combination of local traditions and foreign rites in the domestic sphere. Studies on Roman private domain were traditionally dominated by the organisation of cities and houses themselves. However, it is necessary to stress the dynamic process in which foreign/Roman practices replaced the local ones after the turn from Iron to Roman Age.

Part II opens with Greg Woolf's Chapter 8, which highlights the geographical and social diversity of the Iberian Peninsula. Woolf adopts Horden and Purcell's (2000) description of

the Mediterranean as a microcontinent, and the editors adopted this evocative similarity for this book's title. Many readers might agree with this chapter entirely, but others will argue for the need of a more nuanced examination of the parallel processes taking place in the interior and on the plateaus of such a microcontinent. In Chapter 9, Marta Campo Díaz examines the religious beliefs of the indigenous population through the topic of coinage and the development of urban mints. The role of coins as offerings and amulets is also included to complete the picture. Ana Mayorgas in Chapter 10 studies the memory of Rome in Hispania, or rather the absence of cults related to the foundation of Rome, either in terms of specific festivities or the lack of religious positions within the priesthood. The case study of Saguntum is highlighted in Chapter 11 by Víctor Revilla Calvo to analyse how the Roman past of this city was used throughout the history of the place to strengthen the sense of community, especially during traumatic events, and to make political statements in the changing Roman political scenario. Francisco Marco Simón offers in Chapter 12 an explanation about the role of Roman Army in spreading imperial cults in different areas of the peninsula: the north-west, Lusitania and Baetica. This perspective is not previously explored in the volume. The final chapter by Matthew McCarty and Kimberly Edher aims to locate Oriental cults in Roman Iberia, interestingly found mostly in the coastal areas of the peninsula, but with a focus in interest and case studies from Augusta Emerita. A privileged archaeological context for the study of Iberian religion in Hispania, both in the urban centre and rural areas, is seen in several contributions.

The volume offers a comprehensive and fresh view of different aspects related to Roman religion both in urban centres and in rural areas. The contributions applied multiple research perspectives from the fields of archaeology and ancient history. The result is an extraordinary reference for both national and international students and scholars interested in the religious sphere of Roman Hispania.

## Reference

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