

edge of ancient Greece with topics relevant for current literary, philosophical and art theoretical thinking.

Barringer's book unfolds unexpected and diverse perspectives on the complex relation between religion, ritual, myth and art. The phenomenological understanding of art reception, the interpretation of fragmental dispersed narrative and the idea of immersion in a predestined mediation of mythology provide interesting and perplexing ways of finding links to contemporary questions concerning meaning production in our interaction with the multidimensional world of visual representation.

Maria Hirvi-Ijäs

STEPHANIE LYNN BUDIN: *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2008. ISBN 978-0-521-88090-9. XI, 366 pp. USD 107 (hb), 33.99 (pb).

It is claimed now and then that sacred prostitution existed in antiquity. However, there are not many studies on this interesting subject and this monograph by Lynn Budin is thus most welcome. It is an introduction both to the history of academic studies on "sacred prostitution" and to the ancient sources on the subject.

What this book is about becomes clear right at the beginning: "Sacred prostitution never existed in the ancient Near East or Mediterranean" (p. 1). In what follows, Budin goes through the evidence in detail in 336 pages divided into eleven chapters.

Chapter 1 is a short introduction to the history of the academic discussion of sacred prostitution and to the contents of the book. As the author states, her approach is mainly philological, because "sacred prostitution is ultimately a literary construct" (p. 4). This is obviously an important observation (which may also be valid in the case of other ideas that we have about ancient societies).

Chapter 2 focuses on the ancient Near East, normally considered the birthplace of sacred prostitution. Budin studies with care the evidence, i.e., mainly the various terms that we tend to see as evidence for sacred prostitution in Mesopotamia, Canaan and Israel. Her conclusion is clear: "There were no sacred prostitutes in the ancient Near East" (p. 47), a statement that is based on a convincing handling of the sources.

Chapter 3 proceeds to Classical times. It is an overview of the relevant evidence, and the rest of the book concentrates on the various central pieces of evidence chapter by chapter. This part begins justifiably with Herodotos (Chapter 4). Since Herodotos (*Hist.* 1,199) has, inevitably, influenced other Classical authors – and modern interpretations – in promoting the myth of prostitution, Budin rightly uses several pages to discuss Herodotos. The main passage on prostitution (see above) is quoted in full, translated and analysed line by line, followed by useful observations on Herodotos' style. There is also a discussion of cultural phenomena in Herodotos' times, including the notions of ethnicity and identity, femininity and masculinity, and conquest and rape. All these are important when reading Herodotos' accounts from the various parts of the world and naturally play a central role when discussing matters which deal with sexuality. Budin's conclusion about this passage is as follows: "...the sacred prostitution Herodotos describes in Chapter 1,199 is not real. Rather than a historical reality, it is an almost

poetic description of the current, conquered state of Babylon that pulls together a number of important themes running through the *Histories*" (p. 87).

After these two conclusions, namely that there was no sacred prostitution in the ancient Near East, and that Herodotos' account is not to be taken at face value, it is easy to follow Budin's presentation in the following chapters. Chapter 5 deals with Lucian and the apocryphal "Letter of Jeremiah". One of Budin's leading thoughts throughout the book is that we tend to interpret our sources with arguments that suit our preconceived ideas about the subject under study. This is shown, for example, in verse 43 of the "Letter of Jeremiah", which should not be interpreted as referring to "religion", unlike other verses of the "Letter". It is often analysed as a reference to Herodotos, but, as Budin argues, "in an attempt to get verse 43 to fit in with the rest of the text, modern scholars invoked Herodotos' 1,199 narrative to place religiosity *into* verse 43" (p. 107, Budin's italics). She continues aptly: "... we looked to Herodotos to make sense of 'Jeremiah', much as the drunken man looks for his keys not where he dropped them, but where the light is better."

The next three chapters deal with other texts; Chapter 6 is on Pindar's fr. 122 (set in Corinth), Chapter 7 on Strabo and Chapter 8 on Klearkhos, Justinus and Valerius Maximus. Chapter 9 is slightly different from the other chapters: its focus is on archaeology and Italy. Chapter 10 returns to literary evidence, namely to early Christian rhetoric. The concluding Chapter 11 discusses the survival of the myth of sacred prostitution in modern research starting from the early 19th century; this chapter deals at length with the Victorian era, but also considers the subject of "sacred prostitution" in the framework of the study of ancient religion in general.

Budin studies the evidence in great detail and with notable clarity. The texts quoted are analysed with care and provided with translations, and the book is based on a solid knowledge of modern scholarship. It should be read both by those who maintain that sacred prostitution existed and by those who remain sceptical.

*Manna Satama*

MARCO GIUMAN: *Melissa. Archeologia delle api e del miele nella Grecia arcaica*. Archaeologica 148. Giorgio Bretschneider editore, Roma 2008. ISBN 978-88-7689-213-3. XVI, 288 pp., 23 figg., 23 tavv. EUR 170.

Benché non sia il primo a occuparsi dell'ape e del suo prodotto nel mondo antico, questo volume risulta la più ricca analisi finora effettuata sull'argomento. L'imponente quantità di materiali discussi consiste non solo nelle tante testimonianze "archeologiche", in particolare quelle di carattere iconografico e iconologico, ma anche nelle fonti letterarie di varie epoche.

Il primo capitolo tratta la presenza delle api e del miele in varie fonti antiche estendenti da documenti in lineare B a rappresentazioni letterarie quali l'immagine dell'ape paragonata alla buona sposa (cf. Semonide 7 West) oppure la nota bugonia riportata da Virgilio ed Eliano. Nei cinque capitoli seguenti vengono discussi numerosi temi di grande interesse: api nei miti orientali e in quelli di Creta; api connessi con antri; alveari di ceramica; miele sia come nutrimento alimentare che come sostanza medicinale; miele nel mondo dei culti; miele in contesti funerari; miele come metafora della voce del poeta; il rapporto tra api (e miele) e alcuni eroi