# CULT MATERIAL
## FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS TO INTERPRETATION OF EARLY GREEK RELIGION

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# Contents

## I Cult and Material: Tradition, Theory and Materiality

## II Time and Material: Perspectives to Early Cult

# Worshiping Archaeologies – Theoretical Landscape in the Archaeological Study of Greek Religion and Cult Deposits

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## Abstract

Classical archaeology comprises different research traditions, such as an archaeological, a historical, and an art historical tradition. Each tradition is characterized by a conceptual affinity with another academic discipline. I argue that we need to move beyond the archaeological conceptual scheme, which has acquired a normative position in classical archaeology, since it fails to account for important aspects in the other traditions of classical archaeology. In this paper, I outline a wider conceptual scheme which accommodates several of the research traditions in classical archaeology. At some level, it is possible to discern similar theoretical developments in several disciplines in the humanities, including classical archaeology. During the 20th century, we can identify in these disciplines influences from traditional, social and cultural perspectives. I then outline what is a religious studies tradition in classical archaeology and relate it to the wider conceptual scheme. Lastly, I turn to scholarly elaborations on votives. This investigation illustrates how the various traditions intersect. It also serves as an assessment of the analytical value of the conceptual scheme.

## Introduction

Classical archaeology is an academic discipline which includes different research traditions such as an archaeological, a historical, and an art historical tradition. A characteristic trait of these traditions is their affinity with another academic discipline. Furthermore, several disciplines in the humanities had, partly, a similar theoretical development during the 20th century. Roughly, we can distinguish a traditional, a social, and a cultural perspective. In this paper, I will begin by outlining a wider conceptual scheme which accommodates several of the research traditions in classical archaeology. I argue that we need to move beyond the archaeological conceptual scheme which has acquired a normative position in classical archaeology since it fails to account for important aspects in the other traditions. This will be followed by brief outlines of anthropology of religion and religious studies tradition in the field of classical archaeology. Lastly, I will turn to conceptualizations of votives in order to illustrate how the research traditions intersect, but also to test the heuristic value of the wider conceptual scheme. This paper is a preliminary presentation of a larger study which still is in its initial phase. My aim is to identify broad general lines in the conceptual development of classical archaeology – many aspects and nuances will, therefore, inevitably be omitted.[1]

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[1] Siapkas forthcoming a and b. There are considerable overlaps with Siapkas forthcoming a in the first part of this article.

## Classical Archaeology – a Divided Discipline

Although few of us would question the academic status of classical archaeology, there is also realization and acknowledgement of considerable differences within our discipline. Occasionally we feel that we have more in common with other scholars in other disciplines. For instance, classical archaeologists in the archaeological tradition are more comfortable talking with other archaeologists, than say with colleagues working in the art historical tradition. In other words, the divides are sometimes greater within classical archaeology and its traditions than between classical archaeology and other academic disciplines. A way to accommodate for the internal divisions is to view classical archaeology as a discipline consisting of strong sub-disciplinary research traditions. I use *tradition* to denote a discourse within classical archaeology which is characterized by a conceptual affinity to another, main academic discipline, and, often but not always, an analytical emphasis on certain types of empirical evidence. Examples of tradition are an archaeological, an art historical, and a historical tradition, which are influenced by the developments in archaeology, art history, and history.

Anthony Snodgrass has recently made a fruitful distinction which can serve as a point of departure.[2] He distinguishes four different definitions of what classical archaeology is and/or ought to be. According to the first definition, classical archaeology is a branch of archaeology. It is the part of archaeology which focuses on ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. As a branch of archaeology, classical archaeologists have access to the whole range of archaeological methods and techniques, while at the same time the discipline has developed its specific methods and principles applicable only for this branch. According to the second position, classical archaeology is a branch of classical studies. Here the classical archaeologists elaborate on material evidence in order to shed some light on the achievements of the ancient Greeks and Romans preserved foremost in ancient texts. According to the third definition, classical archaeology is a branch of art history aiming to discover, identify, and establish the artistic achievements of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Due to the fragmentary character of the ancient remains, classical archaeologists are forced to utilize archaeological techniques, but in all other respects it shares the objectives of art history.[3] In the fourth definition, classical archaeology is an autonomous academic discipline with its own concerns, principles, techniques, methods, theories, etc. Classical archaeology is at the same level as other academic disciplines and differs substantially from them.

Snodgrass's scheme acknowledges the internal divides in classical archaeology. However, few of us would confess to one of the definitions while rejecting the others altogether. Scholars pursuing research within any of these traditions are more often than not also engaged in and with the other traditions. Although this scheme can serve as a point of departure for a conceptualization of classical archaeology, we should be cautious not to use it to establish a fixed and static image of classical archaeology. Furthermore, it is feasible to identify also other traditions, such as a religious studies tradition. In this tradition, classical archaeology is a branch of religious studies. Religion and, in particular, rituals are viewed as the most authentic articulations of the ancient civilizations. The

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[2] Snodgrass 2007, 13–19.
[3] Cf. Bernbeck 1997, 11, who argues that classical archaeology in Germany lies close to art history.

main objective of classical archaeology is to elaborate on ancient societies through the study of religious practices and beliefs.


## A Theoretical Landscape – Conceptual Ideal Types

### An Archaeological Framework

The image of classical archaeology as a conceptually divided discipline comprising sub-disciplinary traditions is reinforced if we consider how theoretical issues have been introduced in classical archaeology. A consequence of these divisions is that different issues occasionally have a stronger impact on one, or several, of the traditions. In my experience, the limited meta-theoretical discussions concerning the development of classical archaeology have primarily attracted Anglophone scholars of the archaeological tradition.[4] Therefore, an archaeological conceptual scheme consisting of the various paradigms, such as evolutionary, culture-historical, processual, and post-processual archaeologies, has acquired a normative position also in classical archaeology.[5]

In the evolutionary model emphasis is placed on universal human qualities and similarities. According to it human development has reached a teleological high end in the contemporary western culture. Archaeological cultures were arranged in a hierarchical order based on the conceptual proximity to present-day western culture.[6] It was followed by the culture-historical perspective, which peaked during the mid-war period. In the culture-historical perspective, emphasis was placed on differences between cultures. The notion that archaeological cultures were monolithic clear-cut entities existing side-by-side and replacing each other completely was more explicit in the culture-historical model than in the evolutionary model. The essentializing tendency is even more explicit when it comes to races and/or nations which are the favored analytical entities. These groups, and the deep-seated characteristics they possess, are ascribed to have had determining roles in the development of the past. Furthermore, the culture-historical model lacked the explicit teleology of the evolutionary model.

This gave way to the processual model which was launched in the 1960s as a reaction against earlier archaeologies. Culture was abandoned as the central problem and scholarly attention turned to environmental aspects. In a sense, cultural determinism was replaced with environmental determinism. New scholarly topics emerged as crucial. In classical archaeology, the impact of the processual perspective is visible in the spread of archaeological regional projects. Part of the processual package was the urge for explicit methodological procedures and the search for general laws of human behavior. The inability to produce universal laws beyond mere tautologies, that is, was soon realized, and post-processual archaeology was introduced. Issues of culture, ideology, and agency emerged as new favorites on the archaeological agenda. Context became a new catchword

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[4] E.g. Renfrew 1980; Snodgrass 1985; Dyson 1993. This is not to say that these discussions are completely absent in other traditions. Gehrke 1995, Raaflaub 2003, are two examples of the historical tradition. The normative position of Anglophone archaeology is perhaps most evident when we notice Anglophone archaeological concepts in non-Anglophone publications.

[5] Trigger 1996, Olsen 1997, for the archaeological perspectives.

[6] The classical legacy was still considered as exemplary at this time and the classical civilizations served often as a yardstick in the evolutionary perspective.

signaling that the search for universal laws was replaced by a concern for the particular. According to post-processualism, our perception of the world is a result of our ideas, beliefs, and the ideologies embedded in us. This is not only true for the past but holds equally true also for us today. Another part of the post-processual perspective was the concern with the politics of archaeology. Archaeology is embedded in an ideological context which influences our practices. At the same time, archaeology contributes to sustaining modernity. This second facet of the post-processual perspective provides us with a foundation for the importance of scrutinizing our own practices, since they influence the way we conceptualize the past.

## Towards a Wider Conceptual Framework

Other academic disciplines such as history and art history exhibit similar theoretical developments as archaeology. The development of history, as an academic discipline, is conceptualized according to a tri-partite scheme, consisting of a traditional, a social, and a cultural perspective. In the traditional perspective, historians are concerned with great men, single events, and political history. During the decades following World War Two, and until the 1980s, historians moved away from the traditional perspective to the social perspective. Social historians emphasize themes such as institutions, processes, economic conditions, and social groups. Societies are typically regarded as systems in balance in which different features have a function. The third cultural perspective pays particular attention to individual ordinary agents, their beliefs, their practices, ideologies, and discourses. The term cultural here differs profoundly from culture as it is used in culture-historical archaeology. In this discourse, culture is anything but essential. Culture is dynamic, in constant flux, and a result of perpetual power negotiations.[7]

A comparison of the archaeological scheme with the historical scheme can help us to identify possible similarities between the disciplines. There is a correspondence between the two main disciplines, and their offspring traditions in classical archaeology, as far as we elaborate which topics are preferred and how they are conceptualized. The traditional perspective in history exhibits a similarity to the evolutionary and culture-historical models in archaeology, the social perspective to the processual model, and the cultural perspective to post-processualism.[8]

These three conceptual horizons can also be identified in other disciplines. In art history the turn away from traditional art history did not occur until the mid-1980s with the introduction of New Art History. New Art History incorporates both the social and the cultural perspectives. It denotes everything from studies on social conditions for artists, artistic patronage, semiotic interpretation of art works, to critique of traditional art history.[9] In other words, New Art History is equivalent to both the processual and post-processual perspectives. This complicates, to some degree, the neat scheme presented so far. However, I should emphasize that it is the chronological aspect of the framework that is invalidated, not the analytical separation of a social and a cultural perspective.

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[7] Iggers 1997; Roberts 2001, 2–3 (also for references).
[8] Following Iggers 1997 and others we can note that there is a more explicit conceptual diversification in history than in archaeology.
[9] Rees and Borzello 1986; Harris 2001. In classical archaeology New Art History was introduced by Zanker 1988 and Hölscher 2003, both originally published in 1987.

The development in art history can serve as a reminder that disciplines and traditions can change at a different pace.

However, even if the adoption of a wide conceptual framework has an analytical value we need, nevertheless, to distinguish between two aspects. First, there is a chronological dimension. Different generations of scholars turn their attention to different sets of issues and it is therefore relevant, to some extent, to regard this scheme as part of a chronological framework. We should, however, be careful not to be content with the establishment of a chronological chart in which we pinpoint ideas and trace their spread. This is because, secondly, scholarship in the humanities does not develop along one trajectory in which earlier perspectives are replaced completely by new paradigms. For instance, the social perspective was not abandoned with the introduction of the cultural perspective. It is more accurate to consider the introduction of new perspectives as complements to the earlier models, expanding the analytical realm. In the humanities, we do often return to, and revive ideas from scholars who have been forgotten for a while. In other words, there is a second non-linear quality to this framework.

## Anthropology of Religion

Anthropology has had a considerable impact in classical archaeology. The conceptual proximity of the two disciplines is not least signaled by the persistent tradition in classical archaeology to seek inspiration from anthropological theories and methods.[10] The influence form anthropology is not restricted to one tradition or specific theoretical perspective; I will, therefore, limit my scope here to an anthropology of religion. A conceptual scheme with a tri-partite outline is also adequate for the anthropology of religion.[11] First, we can delineate a traditional perspective, which includes a comparative aspect. Scholars in this perspective are propelled by an aim to order, identify, and account for religious institutions and practices. The overlap with classical archaeology and in particular a religious studies tradition is foremost evident among the ritualists such as James Frazer.[12]

In the social perspective, religion and particularly issues pertaining to religious belief have a subordinate role. Edward Evans-Pritchard noticed accurately that anthropology and the social sciences display a general tendency of indifference or even hostility towards religion.[13] The social perspective, which includes a distinct functionalistic tenet in anthropology, cannot be confined to the period between the 1960s and the 1980s in anthropology. Social scientists and anthropologists articulated concerns characteristic to the social perspective long before it had an impact in the humanities more generally. The social turn in the humanities in the 1960s was fueled by a renewed and reawakened interest in the works of Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and Karl Marx. Nevertheless, anthropology is also influenced by intellectual currents and the social perspective was particularly strong in anthropology during this period. Roy Rappaport's classic study *Pigs for the Ancestors* from 1968, which emphasizes the eco-functional aspect of rituals among highland New Guinea societies, is an illustrative example of this.[14]

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[10] Indeed, there is a genre in classical archaeology which evolves around the possible benefits and similarities between classics and anthropology, see e.g. Kluckhohn 1961; Humphreys 1978; Redfield 1991.

[11] See Eriksen 2001, 209–226.

[12] E.g. Frazer 1890.

[13] Evans-Pritchard 1962, 37.

[14] Rappaport 1968.

In the anthropology of religion, it is particularly through the interpretative, or hermeneutical, approach that the cultural perspective is articulated. Clifford Geertz's essay *Religion as a Cultural System* together with the collection *The Interpretation of Cultures* are seminal since they both mark the introduction of the cultural perspective and place anthropology of religion at the core of the cultural perspective.[15] The cultural perspective is also evident in the works of Bruce Kapferer and Maurice Bloch, the 1990s ritual studies discourse, e.g. Catherine Bell, and the German *Ritualdynamik* School.[16]

## Religious Studies Tradition

The religious life of the ancient Greeks has received much attention in classical archaeology. Many scholars have explored issues pertaining to religion. From a quantitative point of view, there is certainly a religious studies tradition in classical archaeology. In the following, I will present an outline of the theoretical development of this tradition.[17]

From the coalescence of classical archaeology during the second half of the 19th century and until around 1918, the ritualistic perspective dominated ancient religious studies. In this perspective religious beliefs and particularly rituals are considered as the most authentic articulations of the genuine culture of a people and determining for other realms of a society. The ritualistic perspective has an evolutionary side to it. Ritualists often trace the development of religious features into deep pre-history and regard other realms of a civilization as determined by the religious realm. The ritualists, for instance Wilhelm Mannhardt, Hermann Usener, and Albrecht Dieterich in Germany, and James Frazer, Robertson Smith, Jane Harrison in the UK, had also a comparative aim. They were therefore often engaged in debates with other disciplines.[18] The comparative side of the ritualist school was abandoned around the First World War. Nevertheless, theoretical perspectives have a tendency to linger on in the humanities and prominent ritualists, in particular Jane Harrison in Cambridge, continued their scholarly work also after this conceptual turn.[19] Both Sam Wide and Martin P. Nilsson, the first two professors in classical archaeology in Sweden, adhered to the ritualist perspective in their elaborations on Greek religion.[20] We can also discern influences from the ritualistic perspective in Walter Burkert's *Homo Necans* and *Greek Religion*.[21]

A new perspective is discernable after the conceptual turn around the First World War.[22] In many ways, the psychological perspective is the conceptual opposite of the

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[15] Geertz 1966; Geertz 1973.

[16] Kapferer 1984; Bloch 1986; Bell 1992 and 1997. The German *Ritualdynamik* school, e.g. Kreinath et al. 2004. See also Mylonopoulos and Roeder 2006, esp. 9–17.

[17] See also Burkert 1985, 1–4; Morris 1993.

[18] Mannhardt 1963; Usener 1896; Dieterich 1905; Robertson Smith 1887; Harrison 1903; Frazer 1890. See also Burkert 1985, 2. Marchand 1996, 140, argues that the ritualists in Germany were effectively marginalized due to Wilamowitz' rejection of these issues. Wilamowitz had a strong academic and political influence at the time in Germany.

[19] Morris 1993, 21–22.

[20] E.g. Wide 1893; Nilsson 1950; Nilsson 1950–1955. See Nilsson 1950–1955, vol. 1, 10, for influences from the German ritualists.

[21] Burkert 1985, 8; Burkert 1972, 8–96. Furumark 1959; Hyman 1965. Raglan 1965 adheres to the ritualist perspective: see Fontenrose 1966, e.g. 1, 8. Fontenrose's criticism of the ritualist perspective is founded on a scepticism against diachronic explanatory models. As a socio-functionalist focusing on synchronic aspects, we should only expect such criticism from him.

[22] Müller 1892 foreshadowed the psychological perspective, see Morris 1993, 19.

ritualist school. The psychological scholars turned their attention inwards, focusing on internally defined issues while ignoring general debates in the humanities. Certainly ancient religion continued to be in focus, but it was conceptualized as an isolated phenomenon, detached from the other realms of the ancient societies. Individual religious belief was the prime analytical aim. The major difference between the two perspectives is the degree of determination that religion is ascribed with. The ritualists articulate a religious determinism since the historical development in general is viewed as determined by the deep-seated religious structures. In contrast, the psychologists isolate religion and investigate it in its own right. In other words, epistemologically the psychological perspective, like traditional classical archaeology in general, is grounded in naïve empiricism. The psychological perspective dominated the religious studies tradition until the 1970s. Scholars like Max Müller, Lewis Farnell, Louis Mouliner, Birgitta Bergqvist, and Robert Parker, articulate the psychological perspective.[23]

In the 1970s, scholars began to analyze ancient religion in accordance with the concerns of the social perspective. Issues such as the functions of the rituals, and the practical and economic conditions of religious practices emerged to the forefront. In the social perspective, religion is regarded as integrated into the other realms of society. However, when the social perspective is emphasized, religion loses its primary role. The social functions of religion and rituals within a social system become the conceptual backbone. There is an emphasis on synchronic aspects in the social perspective. Structures have a function in and for contemporary society; otherwise they seize to exist according to this perspective. Scholars like Moses Finley, Louis Gernet and Jean-Pierre Vernant conceptualized ancient religion in accordance with the social perspective.[24]

The cultural perspective was influenced by the works of Clifford Geertz, Hayden White, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu, and had a wider impact in the humanities from the 1980s onwards. In this perspective, culture is conceptualized as contested, and as a result of perpetual re-negotiations. Another common denominator is the hermeneutic, or interpretative, methodological outlook. We can identify influences from the cultural perspective in the religious studies tradition. However, the direct influences on scholarship in classical archaeology from the rituals studies discourse and the *Ritualdynamik* School are very limited.[25] As far as influences from the cultural perspective can be detected in the religious studies tradition, they have to be attributed to a more general influence of the cultural perspective in classical archaeology. The cultural perspective influences, for instance, Robin Osborne in his interpretations of rituals which are based on iconographic interpretations of art works.[26] François de Polignac's *Cults, Territory and the Origins of the Greek City-State* is another study which exhibits influences from the cultural perspective turn more generally, and in which the religious sphere has an important bearing for the argument.[27]

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[23] Farnell 1896–1909 and 1912; Moulinier 1952; Cook 1914–1940; Bergquist 1973; Parker 1983. See also below.
[24] Vernant 1990; Detienne 1986; Loraux 1986; Vidal-Naquet 1986; Gould 1985; Fontenrose 1966, 57–60. Finley showed only a limited interest in Greek religion, but see Finley 1985 and 1981.
[25] See also Mylonopoulos and Roeder 2006.
[26] Osborne 1988 and 1989. See also Morris 1993, 27–32.
[27] De Polignac 1995.

Put briefly, also the religious studies tradition in classical archaeology can be associated with the wider conceptual framework. Traditions in the religious studies have a close correspondence with the archaeological tradition. The ritualist perspective mirrors the evolutionary perspective and the psychological perspective the archaeological culture-historical perspective. It is noteworthy that the conceptual importance of religion has diminished considerably during the 20th century and in both the social and cultural perspectives religion is no longer considered as a determining, more authentic realm of the ancient civilizations.

## Approaching Votives

The analytical categorization of theoretical perspectives and research traditions observed so far should be regarded as a heuristic construct aiming to outline a discursive landscape. In reality, it can be virtually impossible to categorize a publication, or the work of a scholar, as adhering to a specific theoretical perspective. It is not my intention to use this framework only in order to pigeonhole scholarly work. Categories of evidence, topics, and methods are relevant for scholars in more than one tradition and/or theoretical perspective. Accordingly, in an elaboration delimited by a category of finds we should expect to encounter several perspectives and traditions. Furthermore, scholars can adhere to a perspective in various ways. Both the perspectives and the traditions are analytical ideal types. In the following, I will elaborate on how votives have been conceptualized. This will serve as an assessment of the conceptual framework.

Votives are, of course, found in archaeological excavations and accordingly published as part of the excavations. However, votives are seldom presented as an analytical category of their own. In the publications of the large archaeological excavations, such as Olympia, Delphi, Delos, Athenian Agora, Corinth, the categorization and publication of votives is primarily based on archaeological concerns. In these publications a category of finds, such as terracotta figurines or metal figurines, is separated and treated as one entity.[28] These categories are often associated with a building, deposit or other relevant archaeological entities. The chronology of the finds is also a primary concern. The critique which claims that classical archaeology presents finds as unique, aesthetic objects in an isolated manner comes of course to mind here. Consequently, traditional classical archaeology obstructs other kinds of non-archaeological contextualizations.[29] However, on the positive side we have to recognize that the practices of traditional classical archaeology facilitates the identification of votives, not the least because of the tendency to focus on large public sanctuaries whose religious character is determined already from the start of the investigation.[30] In other words, as such, the organization of the publications

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[28] This can be observed in the publications of the Athenian Agora in *Athenian Agora* (Princeton 1953–), Olympia in *Bericht* über *die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* (Berlin 1937–) and *Olympische Forschungen* (Berlin 1941–), Delphi in *Fouilles de Delphes* (Paris 1902–), and Corinth in *Corinth. Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* (Cambridge Mass. 1929–). This is also evident in smaller excavation reports emulating the tradition of large excavations, such as in Boardman 1967.

[29] To the standard publications Dyson 1993 and Morris 1994, we can also add Stissi 2003 who laments over the constraints of traditional archaeological publications. The context-less pottery presented in them is an obstacle for religious contextualizations of pottery found in Greek sanctuaries according to Stissi 2003.

[30] Osborne 2004, 3–4.

of these perpetual archaeological excavations is important – but also problematic. The taxonomic principles facilitate a comprehensive understanding of one specific part of the site. However, it is the archaeological concerns that dictate the publications and religious dimensions, beyond the identification of a sanctuary or cult or the like, are of secondary importance. This is yet another confirmation of the naïve empiristic foundation of classical archaeology in the traditional perspective. From a theoretical point of view, it is also interesting to note that issues of the psychological perspective in the religious studies tradition, that we might expect to find here, are absent in these publications. Here, the religious connotations of the votives remain absent.

Analytically, a considerable amount of publications in classical archaeology resembles excavation publications. Votives from a place or a period, cult or cults, region or regions, are singled out and studied. A subset of studies within this category is studies with an iconographic and art historical concern which explore stylistic issues of votives with aesthetic dimensions.[31] These publications have generally little to say about religious beliefs. The psychological perspective is absent here too. These studies are propelled foremost by archaeological concerns in the traditional perspective. I may be generalizing, but it is my impression that this category of publications still constitutes the bulk of publications addressing votives in classical archaeology.[32] A different type of studies confines their analytical topic to a cult, a type of cults, the worship of a deity, or a similar topic. These studies focus on religious issues, and the votives are interesting because they constitute a fundamental part of the religious practices. These studies articulate the psychological perspective since they contextualize votives within the religious realm, but they neglect to integrate religion within the society as a whole.[33]

The social perspective has also left its mark on votive studies. In this perspective, votives are analyzed in order to facilitate an understanding of wider social and economic developments and processes. Methodologically, quantitative methods and statistical analyses feature prominently in studies following the social viewpoint. Snodgrass's elaborations that considered dedications and rituals as an integrated part of the economic and social development of Archaic Greece are illustrative examples of the social perspective.[34] Similarly, Stephen Hodkinson's investigation of the bronze dedications at Spartan sanctuaries is based on the methods of statistical quantification. The votives have economic connotations integral to the social history of Sparta.[35] Tullia Linders articulates a concern for the hard material conditions of life in her studies on the economic aspects of Greek cults and sanctuaries.[36] Colin Renfrew's development of the middle range theory of archaeology of cult resonates with the intense concern for methodology in the social perspective.[37] In these studies, the votives function as one of many categories of evidence in

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[31] E.g. Stieber 2004; Keesling 2003. Robertson 1985 elaborates on the fact that many of the objects that we consider as artworks actually were religious objects to the Greeks.

[32] Brumfield 1997, Anderson-Stojanovic 2002, Voyatzis 2002 and Scholl 2006 are only a few examples from a very long list.

[33] E.g. Farnell 1912; Rouse 1902; Bergquist 1973. See also n. 23 above.

[34] Snodgrass 1991. See also Snodgrass 1971, 394–401. Other examples are of course Snodgrass's students, e.g. Whitley 1988 and Morris 1988 and their elaborations on hero cult.

[35] Hodkinson 1998.

[36] E.g. Linders 1972 and 1988.

[37] Renfrew 1985, 11–26.

elaborations which do not primarily have religious concerns. It is impossible to categorize these studies either as religious or archaeological. It is more appropriate to regard them as articulating aspects of several research traditions. A general problem of functionalistic approaches to religious issues is their inability to accommodate for non-functional dimensions. Ian Hodder addressed processual, functionalistic archaeologists with the remark that archaeologists tend to designate objects and contexts that are non-functional or not understood as religious.[38] In other words, religion is a conceptual anomaly in the social perspective. The conceptualization of religion as an integrated domain in a social system does not conceal the want of conceptual tools to address religious dimensions of votives, such as what kind of beliefs ritual practices they articulate.

In the cultural perspective scholars turned their attention towards aspects such as ideologies, beliefs, mentalities, questions of identities (gender, ethnicity, etc.), and begun to adopt an interpretative approach. Votives, rituals, and religious practices received a renewed attention. Potentially, the concerns of the cultural perspective would ensure a way around the shortcomings of the social perspective. The concerns of the cultural perspective are exhibited in, for instance, Richard Neer's interpretation of the Siphnian treasury at Delphi which incorporates votives in an argument that regards the treasuries at Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries as articulations of negotiations of power between different ideologies.[39] In the cultural perspective, religious and ritual studies had a considerable impact. However, although there is some awareness of both the ritual studies discourse and the *Ritualdynamik* school in, for instance, the work of Joannis Mylonopoulos, the effect of these perspectives on studies of votives in classical archaeology is negligible.[40] This illustrates that the different research traditions in classical archaeology are not always directly influenced by the conceptual and theoretical developments in their main discipline. The cultural perspective has primarily reached the religious studies tradition in classical archaeology indirectly through the core discipline.


## Conclusions

In this article, I have presented a conceptual framework for classical archaeology. According to it, classical archaeology is a discipline without a theoretical and methodological center. In contrast, classical archaeology is characterized by the co-existence of strong research traditions. This framework provides us with a nuanced image of classical archaeology and has heuristic value since it facilitates an understanding of the internal conceptual divides. These divides have had a significant impact on the development of classical archaeology and the traditions. For instance, whereas we can identify sensitivity towards conceptual trends in the archaeological tradition, we can also more generally detect reluctance towards such trends in classical archaeology including the religious studies tradition. I do not argue that classical archaeologists are found at the theoretical forefront or have a strong theoretical impact on other disciplines, but rather

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[38] Hodder 1992, 213–240. Also Osborne 2004, 1–3 who elaborates on processual archaeology's problematic relation to votives. See also Evans-Pritchard's comment mentioned above, n. 13.

[39] Neer 2003, esp. 133. See also above n. 26.

[40] E.g. Mylonopoulos 2006; similarly Kyriakidis 2007.

that it is in the archaeological tradition that we can detect the strongest influences from contemporary intellectual currents. Neither do I argue that other research traditions are completely oblivious to intellectual currents. The social perspective has, for instance, had a strong impact on the religious studies tradition. It is also noteworthy that the cultural perspective in the religious studies tradition is not adopted due to the development in religious studies, but is rather an influence from other research traditions in classical archaeology. This may serve as a reminder that however strong the research traditions might appear to be, they are nevertheless firmly anchored in classical archaeology.

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