

Introduction to the Symposium

This symposium, organized under the auspices of the collaborative research project “*The Emergence of Sacred Travel (EST): Experience, Economy, and Connectivity in Ancient Mediterranean Pilgrimage*” funded by a *Sapere Aude* grant from the Danish Council for Independent Research (www.sacredtravel.dk), aims to shed light on the economic role of sanctuaries and festivals in ancient pilgrimage.

Looking at many standard introductions to the ancient economy, the economy of the sacred goes virtually unnoticed (e.g. Kevin Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy*, Berkeley 1986). Yet during pilgrimages, festivals and fairs, sanctuaries effectively functioned as economic as well as religious and cultural hubs. The field of economic history was thus fundamentally changed with the publication of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea* (Malden, MA, 2000), in which they reconsider the relationship between subsistence, landscape, economy and the sacred in the ancient world, and develop the notion of the sacralized economy. It is fifteen years since its publication: making this an appropriate moment to (re-)assess the question of how we understand the nature and development of sacred economies in Antiquity.

This symposium explores economic aspects of the experience of visiting sanctuaries, (cf. Pine and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*, Cambridge, MA 2011), and is organised to loosely follow the experience of a pilgrim, through five sessions that each cover the chronological spectrum from the Greek period through to Late Antiquity:

- I. **‘Economies of Going’**: to look at economic and experiential aspects of the pilgrimage or journey for sacred purposes itself.
- II. **‘Economies of Gathering’**: to look at the economic aspects of people gathering at sanctuaries and the impact of a sacred space on the rural/urban environment.
- III. **‘Economies of the Human/Divine Interface’**: setting out to examine economic aspects of the interaction between human and divine at sanctuaries, such as sacrifice, votives and the construction of purpose-built architecture.
- IV. **‘Economies of Sacred Production’**: looking at the context of and activities involved in production and consumption within sanctuaries.
- V. **‘Sacred Economies beyond the Sanctuary’**: exploring the long-term economic impact of sacred travel, including the return home, souvenirs, and the relationship between cities and sanctuaries.