early Church philosophy are Marcellus’ recipes for abortion (pp. 129–132, considering 30.19, which Marcellus prescribes also as a remedy for fever), castration (pp. 135–137, 33.62–63, non-surgical), and vengeful prescriptions that damage fellow humans (pp. 133–135, 15.82 – e.g., what to do to an ungrateful patient).

E. cannot and does not deny the preponderance of non-Christian evidence. To resolve the coexistence of Christian and non-Christian remedies, E. suggests that Marcellus included both traditions as a reflection of his times (pp. 112–113): The society was not universally Christian; Christians continued to adhere to popular opinions (or traditional remedies), and contemporary Christian culture was tolerant of non-Christian practices (especially those of proven utility). And Marcellus’ target readership almost certainly included the less educated: plebeis remedia fortuita atque simplicia, quae experimentis probauerant, didici (praef. 2). E. ultimately (and rightly) concludes that non-Christian evidence in de Medicamentis need not militate against the author’s self-identity as a Christian. E. classifies Marcellus among the non-baptized semi-Christians (Halbchrist) for whom traditional beliefs and practices endured (pp. 145–146), concurrent with much recent scholarship exploring the endurance of traditional practices among 4th and 5th century Christians. Marcellus himself declares his intellectual debt to pagan culture and medical traditions (praef. 1; carmen de speciebus 1–6), and this debt does not vitiate the plausibility of Marcellus’ Christianity, partial or full (cp., Augustine, Conf. 3.7–8). It may not be possible to determine to what extent contemporary Christianity influenced Marcellus’ de Medicamentis. Such a study could succeed only with a greater understanding of and deeper engagement with the Greco-Roman magical, medical, pharmaceutical, and encyclopedic traditions.

Williamsburg

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her introduction (pp. 1–24), D. makes it clear that her approach will be mainly, though not exclusively, an archaeological one. Nonetheless, the reader will recognize throughout her work a deep interest in questions usually raised by historians of religion. In this respect, D. should at least have tried to position her approach in the broader context of research on the materiality of religion. Puzzling too is her explicit interest in a «widerspruchsfreies Gesamtbild», since Greek religion is filled after all with fascinating contradictions. After a brief discussion of the discovery of the site and the adventurous fate of the magnificent bronzes from Dodona, D. presents far too abbreviated a history of the excavations from 1960 on. Her summary of Epirus’ history from the Bronze Age to AD 879 is much too concise to be helpful.

D. devotes the second chapter (pp. 25–102) to textual evidence related to the sanctuary and its ritual life. For this chapter, Appendices I–III are invaluable. D. is, of course, not the first scholar to draw our attention to the fact that Dodona is mentioned in the epic poems, while Delphi and Olympia are not. However, she uses the extraordinary prayer of Achilles to Zeus Dodonaios Pelasgikos (II. 16.225–230) as a springboard for a critical discussion of its importance in the ongoing debate over the antiquity of the cult in Dodona and its male priesthood. In my view, D. is right in suggesting that the passage indicates a pre-Homeric tradition, probably one that could be dated back to the Bronze Age. Despite the obvious importance of passages in the Odyssey (14.327–330; 19.296–299) where the sacred oak tree is first mentioned, D. is probably pushing the evidence too far when she posits that cleromancy was the form of divination performed in the early stages of the sanctuary. There is no hint in the passages to support this assumption. Furthermore, they clearly refer to the prophetic qualities of the oak, which D. seems to accept as well. D. is right in placing the Hesiodic passages on Dodona in the interesting context of emerging competition between the Dodonaean and Delphic oracles. In her discussion of the evidence from Athenian tragedies, D. follows mostly H. W. Parke. In my view, this part reveals the chief general weakness – structurally speaking – of the book; among the very detailed discussions of various passages with references to Dodona, the author incorporates in a somewhat disjointed manner analyses of the cult epithet and debated meaning of ‘Naioi’, the festival Naia and its problematic foundation date, as well as the significance of Dione’s cult at Dodona. All three issues would be better dealt with in separate chapters. I do not agree with the author’s idea that the epithet ‘Naioi’ identifies Zeus as a deity related to water or more generally to the «feuchtes Element». Based on a lengthy Herodotean passage (2.55–57), D. addresses in detail the female priesthood at Dodona as well as its mythological connections to the oracular doves and foundation legends at the sanctuary.¹ In

my view, D. is not sufficiently critical of the existence of prophetic doves, which are mentioned only in Philostratus (imag. 2.33). Equally problematic is the very late reference to a prophetic fountain (Serv. Aen. 3.466) and the assumption that the oak tree was worshipped. Although D. is rather critical of the former, she is apparently more willing to accept the idea of tree-worship at Dodona. Her rather lengthy discussion of the so-called gong of Dodona, a Korkyraean dedication whose form is debated, does not really add anything new to our understanding of the sanctuary. When dealing with bloodless animal and human sacrifices, D. is far too optimistic in accepting the existence of human sacrifices in ancient Greece. She is certainly correct in rejecting the idea that the sacrifice of bulls is reminiscent of local Bronze Age traditions. – Compared to the section dedicated to literary sources, the subchapter on lead tablets is far more homogenous, since the material preserved relates almost entirely to the practicalities of the oracular nature of the site, as the tablets record the questions addressed to the oracle. The author correctly points out that we are still waiting for a detailed publication of the thousands (some scholars refer to over 4,000 or even 5,000 such objects) of oracular tablets from Dodona. I share the author and P. R. Franke’s opinion that the question tablets were locally produced. Most likely, they were an additional source of income for the sanctuary. Based on known examples, D. accurately reconstructs the chronology of this tradition (most of the evidence dates to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE), the gender of the person addressing the oracle (with one exception, questions came from male visitors), and the sorts of concerns that brought these men to the sanctuary (most often personal ones with a focus on family, health, property). Geographically speaking, visitors were either locals or from Western Greece and the colonies in Magna Grecia, but also from Athens and even Rhodes. I definitely share D.’s skepticism towards the hypothesis of S. Dakaris that the single reference to Themis Naia is evidence of a so-called Dodonaean «trinity»: Zeus – Dione – Themis. Equally welcome is her skeptical approach to the existence of a cult of Dionysos at the sanctuary. Of the tablets known, only two or three preserve an inscribed oracular answer, which makes it seem all the more probable that the worshippers received an oral answer to their inquiries. At the very end of this subchapter, D. refers briefly to oracular responses preserved in literature (Herodotus, Livy, Cassius Dio, Cicero, Strabo, Pausanias). – The category «dedications bearing inscriptions», which D. covers in her third subchapter on textual evidence, is relatively artificial, since the author includes in it only inscriptions on objects, and not those on dedication-bearing bases. Nonetheless, she is able to draw some interesting conclusions from the preserved material. Dedicatory inscriptions appear almost exclusively on bronze objects (mainly vessels and armor). Apparently, no inscribed Archaic stone statuary, such as the kouroi found in Attica (Athena Sounias sanctuary) or Samos (Heraion), has been unearthed, something which, of course, fits well with the evidence drawn from other Western sanctuaries including Olympia. 2

2 So far, only five votive Kouroi are known from Western Mainland Greece (from Actium and Corfu).
bronze dedications seem to start in the sixth century. The latest examples date to the first century BCE. The provenance of the only two objects of this sort that date to the sixth century (in Paris and Oxford) – which are likewise the only two inscribed bronze figurines – is actually unknown and tentatively associated with Dodona. In my view, the absence of a clear reference to the Dodonaean Zeus in their inscriptions may indicate that they were not found at Dodona.1 With two exceptions addressing Dione and Aphrodite respectively, the objects are offered to Zeus and occasionally to Zeus and Dione. Among the most interesting objects are a prehistoric double axe dedicated to Dodona around the end of the fifth century BCE and dedications documenting the interest of the Epirotan royal house (Alexander I; Pyrrhos) in the sanctuary. As in so many instances in the book, the author’s approach here is extremely reader-friendly, as she includes drawings of all the examples she discusses. However, this part of the study is a bit descriptive; a longer summary might have placed the objects in a broader context.

D.’s third chapter is devoted to the architecture at the site (pp. 103–168). Since the architectural development of the sanctuary has been an important focus of the current Greek excavations at the site and the subject of a recent monograph, this chapter is somewhat out-of-date (especially the sections on the prytaneion and the temenos walls).2 It is organized along chronological lines: a) from the end of the fifth century to 219 BCE, and b) from 219 to 167 BCE. 219 BCE marks the Aetolian, and 167 BCE the Roman destruction of the sanctuary. The author follows the published results of the Greek excavations relatively closely, recognizing in building E1 the central sacred building dedicated to Zeus and in the buildings Γ, Ζ, Λ, Α, and Θ, smaller temples. D. is certainly correct in her cautious approach to the excavator’s attributions of these temples to various divinities. However, I am not convinced that they were all temples and not – in at least a few cases – treasuries. D. accepts the old hypothesis that the first naiskos at the site (first phase of E1) from the late fifth century was a treasury later turned into a temple (second phase of E1) without any architectural modifications. I am not aware of any case of a treasury reused as a main temple in a major Greek sanctuary of the late fifth or fourth century. In her comparison of the third phase of E1, which dates to the early third century, to the sanctuary of Zeus at Megalopolis, D. still dates the latter to around 200 BCE, despite the fact that the complex has now been re-dated to 340 BCE. This brings closely together not only architecturally but also chronologically two important late sanctuaries of Zeus, though it is the Megalopolitan and not the Dodonaean building that seems to stand at the beginning of the peristyle-sanctuary tradition. Regarding the theater, the author does not make the connection between its erection and the establishment of the Naia festival. In this context, she would have done well to mention that the theater’s orchestra was remodeled under Augustus to host the Roman venationes, which means that the sanctuary was not abandoned after 167 BCE. In general,

1 Although there are indeed some examples of inscriptions on bronze objects, which omit the epithet Naíos, the vast majority refer to Zeus Naíos, and in one elaborate case to Zeus Dodones Medeôn.


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this chapter offers an excellent overview of the site’s architectural remains and the history of their study, but is quite superficial and far too brief when it comes to a closer analysis of the connections between architecture and ritual life at the sanctuary. The important issue of the missing altar, for example, is addressed only once and in passing.

The general concept of the fourth chapter (pp. 169–234) is truly interesting. Here, the author focuses on the bronze votives from the eighth to the fourth century in an attempt to understand the site in a period, in which the sanctuary had no monumental architecture. The result, however, is more descriptive than analytical. Nevertheless, this part of D.’s study represents the first comprehensive presentation of the votive material. The objects are divided among five subchapters, which bring together a) tripods from the eighth and seventh centuries, b) divine figures and objects (attributes?) related to them, c) non-mythological figures, d) armor, and e) cosmetic utensils and jewelry. Based on the number of tripods found at the site, D. is naturally correct in placing Dodona among places such as Olympia and Samos where bronze tripods appear as luxurious early votive offerings. She is also right to reject the highly imaginative hypothesis of the excavator who, based on Demon’s description, reconstructed a circle of tripods around the oak tree claiming that they were there until the fourth century. I find highly convincing D.’s idea that the tripods in Dodona had no oracular connotations – the idea would have been too Delphic to be attractive in Dodona – but I do think that she rejects too easily the idea that they were offerings by victorious athletes. 1 There is no need to date the foundation of the Naia back to the Geometric period to see possible victory dedications in the tripods. A local athletic competition, of which no trace remains, may have existed. – Most of the figurines represent Zeus in a typical posture: about to hurl his lightning bolt. None of them show him enthroned. D.’s attempt to associate the image of Zeus hurling a lightning bolt with the epithet Naiaos and to trace its iconography back to Anatolian weather and rain divinities is unconvincing. This iconographic type is far too general to be associated exclusively with Dodona. After Zeus, Poseidon is the divinity most often represented in the form of a bronze figurine. D. too easily dismisses the idea of a cult of Poseidon at Dodona by emphasizing his absence from the Olympian material. Although she makes far too strong and frequent a comparison between Dodona and Olympia in this chapter, it is true that Poseidon and Zeus share one of the prominent double altars in the Olympian altis. 2 Apparently, the absence of Poseidon figurines in Olympia does not indicate the absence of his cult. Additional bronze figurines represent Athena (1), Artemis (1), Apollo (1), Herakles (2), and Hermes (3). Except in the case of Herakles, D. remains convincingly skeptical of the cultic presence of these gods in Dodona (the Apollo figurine was actually dedicated to Zeus). – In her discussion of bronze vases, D. rightly suggests that many of them might have served as cult instruments, which does not a priori exclude that they too were dedicated. I

very much like her hypothesis that many cheek pieces were dedicated without helmets, which continued to be used with new cheek pieces. As stated above, D.’s analysis of individual objects is excellent, highly detailed, and in most cases accompanied by a drawing. On the other hand, she offers no discussion of the dedicators. Who, in fact, dedicated the numerous cosmetic utensils and jewelry? Did they dedicate the fibulae and pins individually or as parts of elaborate garments? Should we really blame the small number of known armor dedications on the lack of relevant publications, as D. suggests, or rather should we place Dodona in the context of sanctuaries that were not overly eager to accept these kinds of dedications?

The main question addressed in the fifth chapter (pp. 235–262) relates to the existence of a Bronze Age cult in Dodona and its possible association with the later cult. Although the earliest finds from the site date back to the third millennium, the late Bronze Age pottery suggests merely the existence of a settlement beneath the later bouleuterion. A protogeometric apsidal house has been excavated in the same area as well. Obviously, the architecture cannot support the hypothesis of a prehistoric cult. The bronze double axes, however, have been often used to argue in favor of an early cult. Nonetheless, D. prefers the idea that the double axes hitherto excavated were used as tools. In general, the interpretation of the small axes made of bronze sheet is more ambivalent, since they cannot have served a practical function. For D., this category of objects points to the existence of an early cult. She considers them either highly schematized idols (rather improbable) or dedications offered by craftsmen who used real axes. – In the second part of the chapter, D. discusses possible recipients of the early cult, such as Demeter. Her reconstruction of an early cult of an oak, transformed in the ninth or eighth century into a cult of Zeus is highly speculative and finds no support in existing evidence. There was no tree worship in Dodona, just as there was none in Athens (in the case of Athena’s olive tree), or on Samos (Hera’s willow). In my view, there was probably a Bronze Age cult dedicated to a male divinity (Zeus?), which was associated with a holy tree within the architectural and ‘urban’ context of a small settlement.

D.’s last chapter is devoted entirely to the holy oak tree identified as a quercus trojana. Interestingly, there is also a strong association between Zeus and the oak tree on Mt. Lykaion. Here, D. briefly discusses the mythological and/or cultic connections of other divinities, such as Rhea, Hera, Demeter, Herakles, Artemis, and Pan with the oak. Throughout the entire chapter, D. makes it clear that she believes in the existence of a cult of the oak tree, which, in my view, never occurred in Dodona.

Extremely helpful are the four appendices containing a) 90 literary passages (original and translation) dealing with Dodona, b) 191 questions to the oracle written on bronze lamellae (with bibliographical references for every single lamella), c) 40 dedicatory inscriptions on objects, and d) 682 – mostly bronze – objects from the site (not all of them votive offerings). In two meticulous concordances, D. connects the plates in the Karapanos publication to inventory numbers in the National Museum in Athens. The book ends with an extensive bibliography and detailed indices.

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Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.
Despite the aforesaid points of criticism, this is indeed a thorough, bibliographically informed and most welcome basis for future research on both Dodona and sanctuaries in general. The reader occasionally wishes for a more explicit expression of D.’s own opinions, but is also grateful to her for granting one the opportunity to finally hold a book that deals with a sanctuary sadly ignored by international scholarship rather than yet another publication on Delphi and/or Olympia. Not only as a Greek, do I salute the author for her command of Modern Greek, without which this monograph would have been impossible. All in all, D. offers a critical and admirably holistic view of the evidence associated with the sanctuary and its history. Even if her theses are not always convincing, they remain worth of discussion. No scholar or student interested in Dodona and Greek sanctuaries in general will afford to bypass this publication.

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