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THE ALTARS OF REPUBLICAN ROME AND LATIUM: SACRIFICE AND THE MATERIALITY OF ROMAN RELIGION. By Claudia Moser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xvi + 209; illustrations. \$105.

As the study of ancient Mediterranean religion moves beyond the long reach of the twentieth-century “big theories” of sacrifice, there has been an appreciable turn to sacrificial realities and specificities. For Rome, recent work (e.g. by G. Aldrete, J. Elsner, J. Scheid, C. Schultz) has mostly concentrated on textual and visual evidence; Moser makes a major contribution by bringing an archaeological approach to this scholarly conversation. Using stone altars as a focal point, the book presents an archaeology of sacrifice in Rome and coastal northern Latium between the sixth and first centuries BCE (with a discernable emphasis on the earlier portion of the period). Five sites receive close attention: Sant’Omobono and the Largo Argentina in Rome, the sanctuary of Thirteen Altars at Lavinium, the Sacred Area of the Republican Temples at Ostia, and the exciting recently-excavated sanctuary at Fossa dell’Incastro near ancient Ardea. Rather than work site-by-site, the book comprises four thematic studies, on spatial organization, on votive deposits, on faunal assemblages, and on addition and adaptation of altars over time. These studies are methodologically omnivorous, in that they combine novel cognitive approaches, network thinking, and scientific osteology with more traditional archaeological stratigraphic and architectural analyses. Moser draws a clear and convincing conclusion that place mattered greatly for Roman sacrifice, since each sanctuary offered distinct spatial, sensory and mnemonic contexts for ritual offering. The book’s epilogue offers several prospects for future study; we might add that a chronological extension of Moser’s work is now a *desideratum*: did site-specific conditions for sacrifice continue in the early

imperial period or was there a homogenization of sacrificial experience? Since the 1990s, it has become conventional to emphasize the “locative” character of Roman Republican religion; readers of this book will discover how local it really was.

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