



# Sharing with the Gods: Aparchai and Dekatai in Ancient Greece (Oxford Classical Monographs)

*Theodora Suk Fong Jim*

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## Sharing with the Gods: Aparchai and Dekatai in Ancient Greece (Oxford Classical Monographs)

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*Sharing with the Gods* examines one of the most ubiquitous yet little studied aspects of ancient Greek religion, the offering of so-called "first-fruits" (*aparchai*) and "tithes" (*dekatai*), from the Archaic period to the Hellenistic. While most existing studies of Greek religion tend to focus on ritual performance, this volume investigates questions of religious belief and mentality: why the Greeks presented these gifts to the gods, and what their behaviour tells us about their religious world-view, presuppositions, and perception of the gods. Exploiting an array of ancient sources, the author assesses the diverse nature of *aparchai* and *dekatai*, the complexity of the motivations underlying them, the role of individuals in shaping tradition, the deployment of this religious custom in politics, and the transformation of a voluntary practice into a religious obligation.

By synthesizing a century of scholarship on 'first-fruits' practices in Greek and other religious cultures, the author challenges prevailing interpretations of gift-exchange with the gods in terms of *do ut des* and *da ut dem*, which emphasize the reciprocal, obligatory, and sometimes commercial aspects of the gift, and explores hitherto neglected notions including gratitude and thanksgiving. Drawing on current approaches to gift-giving in anthropology, sociology, and economics, in particular the French anthropologist Godelier's idea of 'debt', the volume offers new perspectives with which to conceptualize human-divine relations, and challenges traditional views of the nature of gift-giving between men and gods in Greek religion.

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