

Interactional sensibilities: bringing ancient disability studies to its archaeological senses

Emma-Jayne Graham

ORCID.org/0000-0003-2659-1534

Abstract

This chapter presents an argument for the closer integration of ancient disability studies with sensory archaeologies, proposing that in order to understand the lived complexities of being an embodied human in the ancient world it is crucial to combine the perspectives offered by both areas of research. More specifically, it spotlights how these approaches might be used in the context of interactional theory to characterise the ancient experiential realities of both sensory perception and disability or impairment. This is explored with reference to a case study concerning ritualised movement at the Roman sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste (Palestrina), which reveals how greater awareness of the lived experiences of visual and mobility impairments can provide new ways of understanding the sensescapes of ancient religious place and, equally, ancient lived experiences of both religion and disability.

Introduction

In terms of significant new advances in method and theory concerning the identification and interpretation of past lived experiences, sensory archaeologies and ancient disability studies have much in common. Critical evaluation of the complexities of sensory experiences, including the extent to which these underpinned ancient lived identities and ways of being in the world, has flourished in recent years. Over the course of much the same period of time, ancient disability studies research, with its corresponding focus on somatic and sensory impairments and the ways in which these impacted on social attitudes, identities, and perceptions of the world, has begun to redress a significant imbalance in our appreciation of the diversity of ancient experiences. However, their apparent compatibility and shared concerns notwithstanding, scholarship concerning ancient disability (including work that directly addresses sensory impairments), remains remarkably sense-less in terms of its approach and theoretical framing. At the same time, many of the interpretations advanced through the lens of sensory archaeologies continue, in essence, to be inherently ableist, despite ambitions to offer alternative, more holistic and inclusive perspectives on the ancient

world. Sensorial-driven investigations of sight, sound, and movement, for instance, frequently presume a somatic norm in which everyone could see, hear, and move in more or less equal ways, whereas studies which identify the varied ways in which the people of antiquity might encounter impaired bodies and minds continue to privilege the socially and legally disabling implications of these circumstances over the ways in which they were felt and lived.

It is my aim in this chapter to draw much needed critical attention to this paradox. More specifically, I intend to demonstrate quite how far this state of affairs is responsible for actively impoverishing both strands of research, and in particular how it has significant implications for the ongoing characterisation of disability in antiquity as a social ‘problem’. Having reviewed these issues, I will argue that in order to come close to understanding the lived complexities of being an embodied human in the ancient world it is crucial that ancient disability studies and sensory archaeologies interact constructively with one another, rather than continuing to be treated as essentially independent areas of research. The groundwork laid by this discussion anticipates my second and potentially more significant endeavour, which is to show through example how a collaborative approach to the sensory lived experience of ancient disability and impairment can be realistically achieved via the lens of interactional theory, underscoring the important new perspectives it can bring. To do this, I employ as an illustrative case study the example of ritualised encounters with the first century BCE sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste (modern Palestrina, Italy). This reveals how understandings of the lived experience of ancient disability and impairment, and the lived experience of a multisensory world of things, can be significantly enhanced when these approaches join forces. In short, I propose that in order to fulfil their potential, disability studies must be brought quite literally to its senses, and sensory archaeologies must be prepared to disable themselves.

Making sense of antiquity

Both ancient disability studies and ancient sensory archaeologies have emerged comparatively recently as discrete areas of interest within the broad field of Classical Studies. That is not to say that past research never drew attention to the sensory aspects of life in antiquity, such as the likely ‘stench’ of the ancient city (usually a Roman one such as Pompeii or Rome: Classen, Howes, and Synott 1994; Bradley 2002; Toner 2009; Koloski-Ostrow 2015), and the pervasive presence of sounds, including music, within Roman lives

(Horsfall 2003). However, it is only recently that questions have begun to be asked about the nuances of the experiences produced by these sensory encounters and their more complex consequences. Importantly, these new questions extend existing appreciations of the significance of sensory perception beyond rather essentializing reconstructions of what something, somewhere, or someone looked, smelled, or sounded like (for an overview see Betts 2017a; also Betts 2011; Day 2013; Hamilakis 2013; Haug and Kreuz 2016; Skeates and Day 2019). Probing questions are now much more consistently asked, for instance, not about whether something smelled but about exactly *what* scents were associated with particular locations, activities, and routes of movement, how they worked together or against one another, and why it mattered (Betts 2011; Platts 2019); about *how* the senses actively affected certain forms of knowledge (particularly religious knowledge: Weddle 2013; Graham 2017a; 2018; forthcoming a; Harvey and Hughes 2018); about *why it might matter* whether one location and not another was marked out by a distinctive scent, or even the lack of one (compare Bradley 2002 with Flohr 2017); and about *how* detectable sensescapes varied across the seasons and even throughout the day (Betts 2017b; Graham 2018). At the same time, queries are more routinely posed about the power of sensory perception to contribute to the dynamic construction of particular identities (Toner 2009) or places (Derrick 2017; Veitch 2017), and how the experience of different participants in the same activities varied because of their discrete encounters with the specific sensory stimuli of material things (Graham forthcoming a). Finally, research has begun to identify ways to ensure that these studies are as multisensory in nature as evidence will allow, continuing to question how the human sensorium might work as a coherent collective as well as how the material world might occasionally present a person with dissonant or competing affordances (Betts 2017b; Flohr 2017; Graham 2017a). These primarily archaeological studies draw overtly on theoretical approaches derived from phenomenology, inspired especially by the work of Merleau Ponty (1968), and are implicitly – sometimes explicitly – intent on surfacing and understanding sensory modalities that afforded different ways of being in the world. As a result, many archaeological sensory studies dedicate themselves to re-centring the sensorium and sensory perception within our understanding of ancient lived experiences.

At the same time, another strand of ancient sensory research has approached the human sensorium via textual allusions to sensory stimuli and culturally conditioned responses to them. Exemplified by many of the contributions to the Routledge *Senses in Antiquity* series (Bradley and Butler 2014–2018), which includes volumes on synaesthesia, sight, sound,

smell, touch, and taste, scholars of ancient literature, drama, philosophy, philology, and medicine have begun to pursue questions about how the senses were employed, or made to act within, different communicative genres, as well as how they offered a means of ordering cultural knowledge both within and about the ancient world. The written word not only reinforces the presence of the rich multisensory world posited by archaeological studies, but also some of the ways in which it was comprehended and actively manipulated by ancient writers. Sensory allusions might, for instance, be intentionally adduced, even purposefully complicated or inverted, in order to evoke, affirm, or construct shared cultural ideas (Toner 2009; Butler and Purves 2013). Sources show, then, that Greek and Roman individuals frequently employed shared knowledge of the potential meanings and metaphorical power of the sensory world in relation to their own concerns and areas of expertise. In other words, it is not just modern scholars who seek to notice the ancient sensorium: ancient people were also deeply aware of its possibilities.

Major proponents of ancient sensory archaeologies, among them Eleanor Betts (2017a, pp. 2-3), point out that rather than being a theory in itself, this is ‘a way of broadening our perspective on the past by recognising that by focusing on the visual we have neglected a vast body of data and interpretative tools for understanding ancient societies.’ Indeed, of uppermost concern within many (but not all) of these studies is the desire to escape what is regularly described as ‘the tyranny of the visual’. This essentially means seeking to incorporate a deeper understanding of the complex multisensory worlds in which humans have always lived and the role these play in how we order, understand, and share knowledge of those worlds (Betts 2011, pp. 118–119). In particular, multisensory approaches to the ancient world reach beyond the canonical five senses to incorporate other forms of perception, such as kinaesthesia, proprioception, interoception, pain (sometimes described as a tactile or broadly haptic sense), even other ‘senses of’ (e.g. time, place, the uncanny, and humour: Harvey 2018, pp. viii-ix). This set of approaches offers the chance to capture a much wider set of ancient perceptions and experiences and to explore some of the persistent gaps in traditional sources. That is to say that sensory archaeologies present us with constant reminders that there were many more Greeks and Romans than those who happened to write things down, and by implication even more undoubtedly diverse lived experiences. Although their thoughts may no longer be fully accessible, the potential lived experiences of the non-elite, women, children, non-citizens, enslaved people, and of course, those with impairments and/or those whom ancient society may have deemed disabled, need not be completely lost

when we begin our explorations of ancient lives with a consideration of the relationship between the human sensorium and the real-world material contexts in which those lives were lived. In fact, it becomes possible to ask questions about a much more inclusive range of potential emotions, feelings, thoughts, identities, and other types of experience that the perceivable sensory properties of a location, an assemblage of objects, or a set of activities may have worked to produce in conjunction with those historically contingent sensing human bodies (Kjellström 2010, pp. 54–55; Betts 2017a, p. 3–4; 2017b, p. 25). These are, therefore, ‘approaches which recognise the diversity of human bodies and experiences, collective as well as individual identities, and the significance of the body in habituated spaces (often taking an insider rather than an outsider perspective)’ (Betts 2017a, p. 2).

Ableist sensibilities?

Integrating a greater awareness of sensory experiences into existing research concerning ancient identities, activities, and ontologies continues to strengthen the discipline of Classical Studies, making it possible to assess the potential experiences of a much wider group of people than can ever be accessed by close focus on a sample of sources composed by a small section of society. It also positively encourages original investigations concerning the experiences of underrepresented individuals and groups, those who do not always leave durable traces in traditional sources: enslaved people in the mines, children participating in religious festivals, workers in *fullonicae*, and the elderly. This is a list to which should certainly be added the disabled and impaired. Indeed, several proponents of sensory approaches have argued that its value lies precisely in its potential to be embedded within existing and longstanding research questions concerning ancient society and culture, rather than something which runs parallel to them (Hamilakis 2013; Betts 2017a). Nevertheless, by regularly bypassing questions of impairment, ancient sensory studies continue to promote an ableist approach to, and understanding of, the past lived experiences they seek to spotlight. Although exceptions do exist, this broad situation persists despite studies of ancient disability establishing that the communities of the ancient world were composed of people with varying ability to see, hear, move, and, although they have received far less attention, perhaps also to smell, taste, and touch (Graham 2013; Zakrzewski 2014; 2015; Lovell 2015). A typical example, chosen because of its relevance to the religious context explored in the latter part of this chapter not because it is in any way more significant than any other, can be found in a recent account of the likely phenomenological experience of processions in Classical Athens: ‘While individual emotional experiences during a festival or deeply personal responses to

particular symbols were not necessarily shared, the spectators of a procession saw, heard, or smelled roughly the same sensory symbols' (Warford 2019, p. 26).

This is not to say that questions about the sensory experience of the impaired and disabled have not been raised – Eleanor Betts (2011, p. 118) specifically queries 'how would a blind person find their way around the ancient city?' – it is simply that few have sought either to answer them (despite having posed the question Betts does not return to it), or to more systematically place people with impairments at the forefront of their analysis. In many cases this seems to come about because researchers have tended not to consider whether everyone in a particular ancient community will actually see, hear, taste, smell, touch, and move in equal ways, as illustrated by the quote cited above. Additional examples can be found in studies of ancient sound (e.g. Veitch 2017) which, although securely grounded in acoustic principles and rigorous knowledge of the biological capacities of the human ear to detect an audible spectrum of frequencies at particular distances or in specific architectural settings, overlook the fact that, physics aside, within any community there will always be people with a wide range of permanent or temporary forms of deafness or hearing-loss (see Laes 2011; 2018; Adams 2020). Omissions of this nature can also lead to rather sweeping generalisations: 'The noise of the non-elite urban environment, though probably lower than the modern level, startled contemporaries' (Toner 2009, p. 130). The same is true for many investigations that involve aesthetic appreciation or knowledge that is acquired visually, or which rely on the presumed existence of more or less equal visual capacities (e.g. chapters in Squire 2015, with the exception of Coo 2015).

This inherently ableist perspective stands in stark contrast to the fact that researchers engaged in sensory projects remain unerringly alert to the impact of cultural contexts on the interpretation of the experiences that they identify and evaluate, regularly emphasising that interpretations of sensory stimuli are always subjective and culturally or socially constrained, and how essential it is that researchers do not assume that contemporary responses can be decoded in the same way as they would have been by ancient people (Betts 2017b, p 24). As Jerry Toner (2009, p. 123) observes, 'The Roman sensory experience was very different from ours. We cannot hope to re-create their experience in its entirety, but we can establish some of the different cultural meanings that the senses held for them. Above all, Roman sensory experience was related to social status.' Surprisingly then, the broad range of somatic differences associated with impairment that were inherent *within* all ancient cultural

groupings remains largely unacknowledged (the reader might note, for instance, Toner's description of a very singular 'Roman' sensory experience). Of course, compared with other approaches and frameworks for analysis, such as gender theory, sensory studies remains in its comparative infancy, and inevitably it has not yet established methods that allow researchers to convincingly incorporate the potentially limitless variety of humankind without resorting to high-level descriptive accounts or unhelpful banalities. Nor do contemporary publishing constraints support the sort of multifaceted, wide-angled, open-ended perspective that would be needed to successfully encourage this. These caveats aside, the extent to which it remains excusable to overlook the reality that humans, past and present, will always encounter the world via bodies that diverge significantly from those of others in terms of their sensory and mobility capacities must be called into question, not least because of its consequences. By working on the basis of a broad biological norm that supposes that all people could hear, see, move, or speak more-or-less equally, sensory studies risks undermining its own project by promoting a homogenous world in which the sensory experiences that come to the fore are more likely to be nuanced by whether someone is Greek or Roman, rich or poor, than by whether they have a sensory impairment.

I propose, then, that in order for archaeological sensory studies to flourish they need to enter into a more constructive dialogue with research concerning the very bodily disparity of the people whose embodied experiences they seek to investigate, and that this dialogue should not be about merely slotting disability or forms of impairment into sensory studies contexts. Instead, the real value of uniting ancient sensory and disability studies lies in adopting a more comprehensive awareness of the multi-layered facets of ancient lived experience. Indeed, I would argue that a sensory approach which actively seeks to consider how the physical and social world was experienced, interpreted, and negotiated via the body by foregrounding impaired bodies from the very start, makes it possible to adopt the type of interactional approach that has been developed within contemporary Disability Studies.

Interactional theory and sensory-disability studies (or why we should be more sensible about disability)

In the context of the current volume it is unnecessary to balance the overview of ancient sensory studies presented above with an equally comprehensive summary of the development of ancient disability studies (for the relevant scholarly background see the Introduction). However, it is necessary to reflect briefly, and in a critical manner, on some aspects of its

development as a sub-discipline of Classical Studies and, in particular, to draw attention to how ancient disability studies might benefit from a sensory-driven approach with the capacity to broaden its horizons. Indeed, unlike sensory archaeologies which place the search for lived experience and its significance at the forefront of their endeavours, some studies of ancient disability assert that it simply is not possible to explore the lived experiences of impairment and disability in the past (e.g. Trentin 2013, p. 92; Boutin and Porter 2014, p. 121). In part, this is a consequence of how this area of research has developed within ancient historical traditions reliant on textual (and some visual) sources. As most ancient historians will acknowledge, such sources will never provide the fullest and most inclusive picture: ‘The “ordinary”, “everyday” life of the visually disabled,’ notes Christian Laes (2018, p. 103), ‘was seldom worth mentioning’ (see also Pestilli 2005, p. 86 on the absence of mobility impaired people in ancient art). Instead, established social and medical models provide the theoretical frame through which understandings have emerged of how disability was recognised, described, and categorised, and how certain disabling circumstances affected a person’s social and legal rights and expectations, if not their actual lived experience (e.g. Edwards [Rose] 1997; Rose 2003; Laes 2018). Correspondingly, and for good reason, efforts have gone into ‘finding’ as many of the disabled people of antiquity as possible within the margins and between the lines of these sources, in order to determine how they were treated in both life and death, what that might reveal about how disability was defined by ancient societies and, crucially, by legal systems, as well as what the consequences of those definitions may have been for the rights and level of integration of impaired people within a given society (Laes, Goodey and Rose 2013). Evidence for the circumstances surrounding impairments and attitudes towards them have increasingly been identified in less familiar and non-traditional sources. They have been revealed, for example, hidden in the shadows of texts that do not directly address the existence of people with impairments (Laes 2018 represents a successful example of this type of approach), and through the use of bioarchaeological evidence bringing to light individuals who once experienced a range of impairments and potentially disabling conditions (Graham 2013; Southwell-Wright 2014; Zakrzewski 2014; Baker and Francis this volume; Evelyn-Wright this volume).

Ancient disability studies has therefore succeeded in pinpointing some of the social and cultural attitudes towards disabled and impaired people that may have been prevalent at certain moments or in specific places within the ancient world, as well as broader patterns of social and legal behaviours that demonstrate the varying extent and different contexts in

which these people were treated similarly to, or differently from, their peers. These observations have in turn been employed to establish where, when, and how ancient communities responded to particular bodily or cognitive differences. However, because written sources, especially legal ones, tend to report what society had determined should happen when someone presented with a particular impairment that *marked them out* from those without one, this can occasionally result in ancient people with impairments being framed in unfortunately negative ways, as something of a problem that ancient society was ‘confronted with’ and ultimately ‘coped with’ (Laes 2018, p. 87). Relatedly, even recent works persist in problematically describing ancient people as ‘suffering from’ a particular condition or impairment (Laes 2018, p. 16; also p. 18: ‘a man who suffered from gigantism’). Attempts to counter this tendency to begin from an implicitly negative standpoint have emphasised the wide spectrum of bodily disparity in antiquity and the large numbers of people who would have experienced some form of (potentially temporary) disabling circumstances (Graham 2013; Zakrzewski 2014; 2015; Pudsey 2017; Graham 2020). Nonetheless, and in contrast to the favouring of increasingly emic perspectives in sensory studies, the origins of ancient disability studies within ancient social histories has resulted in a favouring of what can be considered broadly etic perspectives, certainly when it comes to considering lived *experiences* of impairment, even if these perspectives are still grounded in the broadly emic sources of a specific social or cultural context. Put differently, the emic experiences of those with disabilities remain under-explored in favour of investigations into how their experiences were mediated by interaction with their peers.

It is genuinely incongruous that one sub-discipline of Classical Studies should focus explicitly on identifying and interpreting ancient lived experience while another, which has the varied somatic capacities of human beings at its very heart, should only rarely attempt to do so. This is even more striking when we consider that accounts of lived experience and the agency of the disabled are increasingly considered indispensable within contemporary Disability Studies (see the Introduction to this volume; Sharples 2019 debates some of the pros and cons of this for ancient disability studies). In previous work I have attempted to address what I consider to be the etic bias of ancient disability studies prompted by an emphasis on the social and medical models by considering mobility impairment through the lens of interactional theory as it has been developed for contemporary Disability Studies (Graham 2017b; 2020). The ideas associated with interactional theory presented by Tom Shakespeare (2006) and Christopher Riddle (2013a; 2013b) might, however, also offer a way

to bridge the gap between ancient disability and sensory studies. In particular, I suggest that this is possible because of the emphasis it places on seeking to understand *experiences of impairment* which arise as a consequence of a complex interweaving of an underlying physical impairment and the world in which a person lives, or the social and cultural context in which that condition was experienced. After all, at its core, interactional theory acknowledges that ‘impairment has both physical and social dimensions’ (Riddle 2013a: 32). In other words, interactional studies of disability seek to uncover the lived experience of a physical impairment – something that might be achieved for the ancient world by adopting the sort of perspectives offered by sensory archaeologies – at the same time as it situates its interpretation of these experiences within the relevant social (or cultural) world in which they are lived – the sort of world that has been meaningfully constructed by ancient disability studies making use of social models. The question arises, then, as to whether ancient disability might actually be better understood by actively combining the experiential insights offered by sensory archaeologies and the social ones provided by existing work in disability studies. As Christopher Riddle (2013a, p. 27) has argued for the contemporary world, ‘If what we seek is a model to characterize the reality of the experience of disability, I submit that the social model is not it.’ Inevitably, true interactionality will always be more easily achievable for contemporary contexts which allow researchers to gather first-hand accounts from individuals about their lived experiences or for which the researchers themselves have personal experience. In these contexts the definitions of disability that interactional theory allows to emerge also have direct and hugely significant consequences for contemporary disability rights (Riddle 2013a, p. 23 and p.27). However, making use of the sorts of analytical and theoretical perspectives adopted by ancient sensory studies to detect and evaluate embodied lived experience means that an interactional approach to disability may be more attainable for the ancient world than scholars have allowed.

In previous projects I have aligned the two aspects of interactional theory with the medical and social models more familiar to ancient disability studies, in order to create a productive interactional dialogue between the two. This has entailed finding ways for bioarchaeological and artefactual evidence for the presence of underlying physical impairments (i.e. the ‘medical’) to be employed in addressing questions about the ways in which people with particular impairments were integrated into wider community contexts (i.e. the ‘social’), revealing that instead of remaining fixed any resulting social disability might vary in terms of its physical temporality (Graham 2017b; 2020). Interaction between the physical and

contextual dimensions of ancient disability or, as noted above, the weaving together of information concerning underlying physical impairments with what is known about the world in which they were experienced, can, however, also be achieved by adopting the more comprehensive understanding of the latter offered by sensory archaeologies. After all, the worlds in which impairments were experienced extended beyond the societal expectations and attitudes presented in ancient textual discourses to incorporate the rich multisensory material and physical worlds in which people actually lived. Drawing on sensory archaeologies consequently makes it possible to situate the impaired bodies of antiquity in a complex social *and* sensory world of personal lived experience. It allows us to explore not only how impairments affected the extent to which a person was able to participate in social and cultural life, and how that impacted on the ways in which other people identified and categorised them, but also *what it was like* for them to physically live in that world, *how it felt* when their bodies participated in it, and *what those lived experiences meant* for their own personal identities and the ongoing construction of that social world itself. Interactional theory therefore encourages increasingly nuanced explorations of the relationship between lived experiences and the determination of both personal identities and wider social attitudes. This, in turn, requires that traditional investigations of ancient impairment and disability become integrated into studies of ancient ways of being in the world that are driven by a greater awareness of experiential (i.e. sensory) factors in the creation of those worlds.

Insert Figure 1: View from the *piazza della cortina* (terrace VI) of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, Praeneste (Photo by Liana Brent).

At the same time, relating the personal and social identities of the disabled with the sensory and physical experiences that gave rise to them, offers the chance to effectively empower the impaired individuals of antiquity to play a more active role in determining how those sensory worlds should be recognised and interpreted today. It also compels new questions about ancient lived experience that are driven by deeper understandings of ancient impairment, rather than researchers simply attempting to slot impaired bodies into existing interpretations or models retrospectively, essentially succeeding only in highlighting sensory or embodied experiences from which they were potentially excluded. That is to say, instead of writing off the splendour of the view that greeted a person upon reaching the summit of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste as an experience unavailable to a blind or visually impaired visitor (Figure 1), this approach makes it possible to flip those expectations and to actively,

and more positively, investigate what the sensory and embodied experience of a visually impaired individual actually may have been. For example, downplaying, but not entirely removing, the potential for visual affordances helps to draw attention to other potential sensory experiences, such as changing levels of light, sounds, smells, or temperature as a person entered the open space from an enclosed staircase, or more broadly haptic experiences of moving into an exposed area on which the sun might beat down, where the wind might move more freely, or where people stand further away from one another. In other words, it encourages a focus on what *was* potentially experienced, instead of what *was not*. This then raises questions about whether the wide range of potential affordances offered by the physical environment were also sensed and experienced via the bodies of all visitors, and whether the view really was the only significant aspect of their experience of the piazza. As a result, this more positive perspective on the lived experience of impairment as reconstructed via potential sensory encounters with the material world also supports a wider research agenda, in this case the quest to understand the role of the sanctuary's architecture in the production of particular ways of being in the world, which in this example involves ways of being that relate to ritual activities and religious forms of knowledge (Graham forthcoming b). At the same time it makes it possible to identify experiences that were closer to the lived realities of ancient impairment as they were actually felt by different individuals and to understand them on their own terms, rather than as a diminished version of those of their abled peers.

Combining the available evidence for the presence of impairments in the ancient world with the ways of exploring lived experience that sensory archaeologies promote – that is, seeking to identify how the world may have been experienced via not only the traditional five senses but also through broader haptic forms of perception concerning kinaesthesia and proprioception – therefore offers opportunities to move our knowledge and understanding of both in new directions. It can introduce greater nuance into discussions of sensory experience, whilst enabling a deeper acknowledgement of the impact of impairments on the lives of the impaired and disabled as they were actually lived. The following case study picks up where we left off with the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia and puts these ideas into practise, exploring how understandings of the lived experience of a particular location might be changed by foregrounding not merely the presence of impaired and disabled individuals but their specific responses to the sensory affordances of that location.

Disability, impairment and religion in Roman Italy

Major sanctuary sites of Republican Italy, such the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste, provide a practical context in which to test an interactional approach to ancient lived experience that blends sensory and disability perspectives. In part this is because many of these sanctuaries offer well-preserved, or at least well-documented, archaeological evidence that enables a reconstruction of the material environment encountered by the people who made use of them for ritual purposes. This evidence makes it possible to identify potential activity locations and routes of movement through and around a defined location with a known function. A wealth of existing knowledge concerning Roman ritual practices, especially what these required people in particular roles to do, and the abundance of identifiable potential sensory affordances associated with the material things that these activities caused people to physically engage with (e.g. objects, incense, animals, clothing, flames, liquids, foodstuffs, etc.), can subsequently be combined with this knowledge of the material landscape (the bibliography on Roman ritual is too substantial to list here but see for example, Rüpke 2007; Schultz and Harvey 2006; Raja and Rüpke 2015; Moser 2019; Graham forthcoming b). Together these facilitate an assessment of the potential lived experiences that might arise from ritualised performances at a particular sanctuary.

During the Republican period, sanctuaries across central Italy were also frequently associated with votive practices which appear in many instances to have had a connection with perceptions of healing. Evidence for this appears in the form of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of anatomical votives: clay or metal offerings shaped into models of body parts (Draycott and Graham 2017; Hughes 2017). These offerings most probably had a connection with requests for divine intervention concerning the bodies and wellbeing of humans. This large quantity of artefactual evidence consequently attests the presence at sanctuary sites of real individuals with sensory and mobility impairments, even if the precise nature of their circumstances must necessarily remain speculative (Graham 2017b). Anatomical votives connected with both external and internal human anatomy also highlight very clearly the wide spectrum of bodily disparity that was prevalent within ancient communities, aligning with comparable evidence for physical impairments derived from bioarchaeological studies (Graham 2013; 2017b; 2020). A connection between sanctuaries and the treatment of potentially disabling impairments is also sometimes evidenced by their topographical correlation with thermo-mineral water sources that had demonstrative therapeutic qualities (Bassani 2014; 2019). Sanctuaries at these watery sites also attracted considerable numbers of

visitors, and once again this ritual community most probably included people whose somatic experiences were at least temporarily impaired.

Even when circumstances mean that many of the offerings and other portable objects left at sanctuaries have been destroyed, cleared away, looted, or simply lost through later re-purposing of the site (as is the case with the example of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia discussed here), it can be asserted with some confidence that people with a host of different impairments would once have visited these locations. This is not only because votive cult was ‘probably the “core business” of cult places’ (Rous 2010, p. 23), attracting a diverse community of visitors including those with impairments who might wish to seek divine assistance with their personal well-being, but because of the importance of religious activities to Roman social and cultural ways of being. To date, studies of disability in the Roman world have not been able to demonstrate that the impaired were systematically excluded from participating in religious rituals, and the evidence for and against the extent of their involvement is often contradictory and highly situational. For instance, although sources indicate that ‘speech disorders accompanied by decreased hearing or any other physical defilement were regarded as sufficient reason to reject young girls between the ages of six and ten as Vestal Virgins’ (Laes 2018, p. 139; Gellius *Attic Nights*, 1.12.3), there is also evidence from 14 BCE that attests a blind Vestal (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 54.24; Laes 2018, p. 101). The proscription against impairment for new members of the Vestal order was probably connected with the ritual expectations of their discrete and hugely significant public role, whereas the apparently contradictory case of the blind Vestal no doubt arose as a result of a sensory impairment that developed later in life but which was not considered significant enough to remove the experienced woman from her role (see DiLuzio 2016, p. 123). The Vestals were, however, hardly typical of most people’s experiences and these restrictions on participation cannot be applied more generally. Indeed, the many thousands of anatomical votives that survive from the Republican period surely counter any suggestion that ordinary people with sensory and mobility impairments were routinely excluded from religious places or activities, even if certain impairments may have prevented individuals from holding positions of responsibility within major cults (Laes 2018, p. 180; for contrasting evidence from Greece see Dillon 2017, pp. 169–170). Given the cultural importance of maintaining the *pax deorum* it is difficult to imagine that potentially large numbers of Roman people were prevented from participating in fairly ordinary religious rituals, such as personal votive cult or attending public sacrifices and festivals, on the grounds of impairment or physical

imperfection, since that would almost certainly have ruled out much of the population (see Pudsey 2017, p. 14).

Multisensory lived experiences at the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia

Like other sanctuaries, the monumental complex dedicated to Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste, about 35 kilometres to the east of Rome, was almost certainly frequented by people with a range of impairments. The monumental sanctuary itself was constructed around the end of the second century BCE (c.110–100 BCE) overlooking the urban area of the city of Praeneste and the hills beyond. Incorporating the naturally steep topography, the sanctuary comprises a series of narrow linear terraces (numbered I–V) accessed via ramps and staircases that led the visitor up to a wide open space bounded by a three-sided portico (terrace VI, the so-called *piazza della cortina*), with a further terrace (VII) supporting a theatre *cavea* and a curved portico located in front of a circular temple or *tholos* at the very summit of the structure (Figure 2). Given the small size of the *tholos* and the orientation of the *cavea*, the *piazza della cortina* was most probably the setting for major public rituals. Terrace IV, known as the *terrazza degli emicicli* (the terrace of the hemicycles), was divided into two parts by the sanctuary's central staircase, with what appears to have been an area dedicated to animal sacrifice located on its western side, and an oracular shrine on the eastern platform (mentioned by Cicero, *On Divination* 2.41–42). These must also have hosted specific groups of people engaged in associated ritualised activities, although the restricted space made these gatherings smaller than those in the large piazza. Given the complexity of the site, and its multiplicity of differently arranged open and enclosed spaces, I intend to focus here on the main access route into (and possibly out of) the sanctuary, since this encapsulates a number of potential sensescapes and opportunities for differently lived experiences for those who came to the sanctuary in order to participate in its range of ritualised activities.

Insert Figure 2: Reconstruction of the late Republican monumental phase of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, Praeneste (drawing by Matilde Grimaldi).

Access to the various terraces was facilitated by a succession of ramps and staircases (including the steps of the *cavea*). These structures are commonly interpreted as a means of controlling or directing ritual movement upward, around, and through the sanctuary, primarily through the manipulation of sightlines and a steady increase in elevation. Filippo

Coarelli (1987, pp. 43–47, fig. 14), for example, demonstrated that as a visitor to the sanctuary ascended, the series of terraces acted to periodically reveal or obscure key monumental components (Figure 3). This visual experience was accompanied by a progressive reduction and then final expansion of space as the visitor emerged from the enclosed ramps and restrictive axial staircase into the *piazza della cortina* where they were struck by spectacular views of the landscape that had been only briefly glimpsed once before, through a narrower gap at the top of the two main (covered) access ramps. Coarelli (1987, p. 55) suggested that this view, framed by the wings of the triple portico that also aligned with the peaks of the Monti Lepini and the Colli Albani, was crucial for the message that the sanctuary officials wanted to convey: that is, it visually represented the subordination of the landscape (nature) to architecture (culture).

Insert Figure 3: Cross-section of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste showing possible upwards sightlines (drawing by Matilde Grimaldi after Coarelli 1987, fig.14).

Benjamin Rous (2010, pp. 105–106) has argued more recently that at key points along the main access route through the sanctuary, the attention of the visitor was also drawn by other sensory cues, which actively aided navigation and caused the visitor to pause:

‘Fountains were placed at the very beginning of the route, at the bottom of the lateral ramps, where pilgrims could ritually cleanse themselves. They were then guided up these ramps by the placement of great fountains placed in niches built into the great substructions walls of the *terrazza degli emicicli*. At the crucial nodal point at the top of the access ramps, water again may have influenced the decision of which path should be followed. Placed at the sides of the axial staircase, two fountains must have attracted the attention of the visitors primarily by the sound of water splashing into the basins, thereby partially offsetting the impact of the view of the valley at this point, or at least constituting a new sensory experience after having taken in the scenery.’

Although visual affordances continue to dominate this more sensorially informed reconstruction of movement through the sanctuary, Rous draws attention to the aural affordances of water in motion. To this might also be added the tactile and potential gustatory properties experienced by those who engaged with this water in the course of purification

activities, as well as its broadly haptic cooling properties as it came into contact with the skin. Rous (2010, p. 106) suggests that visitors reaching the *terrazza degli emicicli* were compelled by these sensory affordances, as well as the ritualised actions that the water prompted, to pause and to make decisions about whether to enter either the eastern or western terrace, or to continue up the steep central axial staircase towards the upper levels of the sanctuary (which at that point were out of sight: Figure 3). In this context, it is important to note that the two parts of the *terrazza degli emicicli* may also have prompted different multisensory experiences, since ‘the observation of a ground plan alone does not necessarily tell the whole story when talking about itineraries through the complex’ (Rous 2010, p. 6). The eastern platform housed an oracle, comprising a pit (7.50 m deep) marked by a tall stone *tholos*, whereas the western side featured a circular altar with associated evidence of burning (Coarelli 1987, p. 50). The latter appears to have been the primary location within the sanctuary for the performance of animal sacrifices, with access for quadruped victims provided by the additional lateral ramp that led directly up to this part of the terrace in parallel to the main façade ramp. Given the absence of an (identifiable) altar elsewhere in the sanctuary, the incredibly steep architecture of the complex, and with access to the large *piazza della cortina* requiring the negotiation of a narrow flight of steps, it is very possible that large animals were only ever sacrificed in this one part of the sanctuary (Graham forthcoming b). As a result, the sights, smells, sounds, and potential tastes of animal sacrifice may have been especially concentrated on the western terrace, presenting visitors with a sensescape that was markedly different from that on the eastern terrace, where rituals occurred that were connected with the oracle. Nevertheless, these differences would have begun to be detectable from the small area at the top of the main ramps from which these two terraces could be accessed. ‘Sound and odour are no respecters of visually or kinaesthetically discrete places’, notes Eleanor Betts (2011, p. 121), and at Praeneste there certainly appears to have been little in the way of architectural impediment to the flow of sounds and smells between the two parts of the terrace and this axial entry point at the summit of the main access ramps.

Although the addition of other sensory affordances into these reconstructions of the experience of moving around the sanctuary prompts an understanding of lived experiences that move away from traditional sight-dominated interpretations, this remains in essence an ableist account of the experiences connected with accessing particular parts of the sanctuary and engaging in specific ritual activities. It assumes, for instance, that every visitor was able

to see, hear, and move in equal ways around this architectural configuration and that when a person reached the top of the ramps that they could see, hear, or otherwise assess the possibilities for further movement that were presented to them. Yet, as established in the first part of this chapter, at least some participants in the ritual activities performed at the sanctuary will have experienced physical and/or sensory impairments that combined with this sensescape to produce alternative experiences. What is more, the aim of interactional approaches to ‘characterize the reality of the [ancient] experience of disability’ (Riddle 2013a, p. 27) prompts us to remember that it is insufficient merely to note that not everyone would have seen the suddenly revealed panorama from the top of the ramps or staircase, heard the gentle splashing of the water, or been able to distinguish between the different soundscapes of the eastern and western terraces, or indeed have been able to climb the axial staircase to the higher levels (at least not without assistance). Although these observations are undoubtedly accurate, they do not provide any particularly valuable insights concerning the lived experience of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia for people with impairments or disabilities. All that can be concluded is that certain aspects of that experience may have been diminished, absent, or experienced differently by some people. In this way, such observations focus unduly on the subtraction of identifiable aspects of experience from a presumed able-bodied ‘norm’, paring down the experience of disabled people to what is effectively a much less complex lived reality. That is to say that they do nothing but emphasise which aspects of an experience a person with particular impairments may *not* have had, rather than foregrounding the experiences that they *may have had*. So let’s begin again, this time exploring access to the *terrazza degli emicicli* and the *piazza della cortina* from the potential perspectives of people who had varying degrees of mobility and sensory impairments, in order to assess what their experiences may have entailed.

Visual impairment

The sanctuary’s two primary access ramps ran for a length of approximately 67.31 metres and were around 5 metres in width (Fasolo and Gullini 1953, p. 88). The architectural arrangement of each effectively enclosed all visitors within a linear space, with a high wall and the monumental substructure of the *terrazza degli emicicli* cutting them off in multisensory terms from the affective properties of the surrounding landscape on both sides. This must have had the effect of focusing the senses inwards on the unidirectional in-the-moment experience of upwards (or downwards) motion. The ramps also comprised two discrete pathways: one ran against the outside wall and was covered by a roofed colonnade of

narrow Doric columns that separated it from the other, unroofed, pathway closest to the terrace substructures (see Figure 2). The width of each side allowed ample space for the use of walking sticks and other mobility aids, and for more than one person to walk abreast, and despite the absence of handrails the columns located along its route would have provided regular supports and rest stops for those who required them. Whether the two distinct pathways had clearly defined functions remains uncertain, as does the extent to which their use was formally regulated. It can be argued, nonetheless, that lived sensory experiences of ascending the steep ramps at Praeneste were important for the production of discrete understandings of the sanctuary as religious place (Graham forthcoming b). If worshippers used one 'carriageway' for ascending and the other for descending, for example, then the ramp clearly demarcated different communities of worshippers: those who had, and those who were yet to, participate in certain religious performances. There might also be a host of other things that distinguished the users of the two sides of the ramps: social status, gender, official processions contrasted with casual visitors, those who intended to divert onto one of the discrete activity platforms of the *terrazza degli emicicli* or to continue to a higher point within the sanctuary, and so forth. Regulations may also have varied according to the time of day or in relation to particular festival occasions.

Regardless, the architectural form of the ramps points towards two groups of moving people who were physically separated by the colonnade. People with visual impairments using either side most probably experienced a sense of enclosure, communicated to those who retained some visual perception by lower levels of light caused by the high walls or roof, haptic experiences of the cooler shade of the colonnade, and the acoustic properties of the partially enclosed space through which they moved. The movement of their fellow ritual participants, and the ways in which it related to their own movement, might also be sensed through in the slap of leather footwear or striking of hobnails on the stone paving, and the subtle effect on the volume or pitch of voices as people moved by, possibly also through temperature sensitivity and other tactile affordances brought about as walking caused them to move past columns and potentially in and out of the sun, rain or wind. These sensory affordances, in turn, continued to allow the people on either side to be aware of the presence of the other group, with multisensory perception actively drawing attention to how their own particular place in the world was signified by their potentially differential movement. This, however, also draws attention to the experiences of other visitors, who similarly had their vision manipulated by the long colonnaded passageway and who not only saw but also sensed via

altered acoustic properties an enclosing wall blocking out the wider world. Everyone ascending the steep ramp via a shaded, dimly-lit colonnade, with their perspective largely restricted to what was directly ahead of them, their own regular steps mimicking the repetitive columns, may also have experienced a feeling of heightened anticipation afforded by the physical setting through which they moved. Importantly, then, all of these sensory affordances were available to individuals without visual impairments, but their significance crystallises in new ways when it is visually impaired people who first populate our sensory reconstructions, rather than those who are assumed to be able to see, hear and feel everything.

Mobility impairment

The material properties of the primary access ramps on the façade of the sanctuary were most probably involved in producing a particularly acute embodied experience for the mobility impaired, that is for people who experienced the material world with reference to limited or painful independent physical movement of the body, especially in terms of ambulatory motion or circumstances which affected stamina. Most significantly, the ramps were long and very steep: in fact, the 22 degree gradient of the slope of each ramp (Fasolo and Gullini 1953, p. 88) is actually steeper than is comfortable for the human ankle's angle of flexion when the body is ascending, something that would have resulted in the distortion of the normal gait (Hollinshead 2015, pp. 20–21, who notes that a pitch of 5–15 degrees is recommended by modern architectural standards in the USA). Ascending the ramp was consequently not easy and will have been an uncomfortable experience for the bodies of all visitors, but one that was probably even more accentuated for those with mobility impairments which already affected gait, movement, balance, and stamina. This can be compared with experiences of negotiating the axial staircase which led from the top of the ramps on the *terrazza degli emicicli* to the *piazza della cortina*. With risers of around 0.23 metres and a run (depth or tread) of around 0.39 metres, the staircase appears to have remained close to the ideal dimensions proposed by Vitruvius, whose calculations Mary Hollinshead suggests would have favoured steps 0.22 metres high and a run of 0.44 metres deep (Fasolo and Gullini 1953, p. 118; Hollinshead 2015, p. 19; Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 3.4.4). This is a height which is slightly above the recommendations of modern design norms of 0.15–0.18 metres but towards the lower level of the dimensions of the ancient Greek steps connected with religious sites assessed by Hollinshead (2015, pp. 20 and 21). The poor preservation of the steps has made it difficult to determine their gradient or pitch, although the dimensions proposed by Fasolo and Gullini (1953, p. 123) of a total rise of approximately 7.85 metres made up of 32–

33 steps, and a length from top to bottom step of 12.80-13.20 metres, suggests around 30 degrees. This is also in alignment with the optimum dimensions of 30–35 degrees, and the permissible 30–50 degrees, for the pitch of modern staircases (Hollinshead 2015, p. 20). However, at Praeneste, the large number of steps in a single flight, combined with the absence of a handrail or other support, required an extended period of difficult climbing that is likely to have presented a challenge for some visitors with mobility impairments (a UK government planning document notes that long flights of steps are problematic in the context of impaired mobility and that ‘the maximum number of risers in a flight should be 12’; Inclusive mobility, n.d.).

Ascending the staircase may, therefore, have represented a physical barrier for some individuals, at the same time as the typical form and characteristic dimensions of the steps would have drawn upon familiar and established muscle memory for others who were able to ascend, albeit with some difficulty, replicating a motion that was experienced in other places such as domestic settings or public entertainment venues. The ramp also required sustained and potentially uncomfortable movement but, when combined with the wider architectural context, the unfamiliarity of such prolonged purely linear movement, and the intended ritualised purpose of the ascent, this was likely to have marked this experience out as especially distinctive. As Hollinshead (2015, pp. 20-21) notes, ramps with a pitch of more than 20 degrees are less energy efficient for humans than steps, and ‘their gradual path requires approximately five times the area of stairs in achieving a comparable elevation.’ As a consequence, even though people will have been familiar with negotiating inclines and slopes within the local environment, it is unlikely that semi-enclosed artificial ramps on the scale of those associated with access to the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia were encountered as part of daily life. They were an almost unique part of the experience of visiting the sanctuary in order to witness or participate in particular and potentially special or deeply personal ritual activities. In this way the experience of ascent differed subtly from the more familiar challenges of the staircase.

Although nobody, impaired or otherwise, approached Fortuna Primigenia in an entirely comfortable manner, this is likely to have been exacerbated for those whose experiences of impaired mobility made movement difficult or painful. As noted in a previous study, pain causes distances to become warped and space to take on new meanings as a person’s spatial world is defined with direct reference to the painful body at its heart (Graham 2017b, p. 259).

For people with impaired mobility who encountered the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, the ascent of its ramps may have taken a considerable amount of time and had the potential to be especially physically demanding (perhaps also, of course, for the bodies of anyone assisting them). For people undertaking a pilgrimage to the oracle, or to participate in a particular annual festival, this kinaesthetic experience contributed to the production of highly situational and personal forms of knowledge concerning religious ways of being in the world (Graham forthcoming b). In other words, the ramps (and perhaps eventually the steps) were not merely a challenge to be overcome in order for mobility impaired individuals to participate in the same ritual activities as other members of their community, they were also a core part of the lived experience of that religious activity itself. This was an experience that began long before participants could engage in activities on the upper terraces, being initiated at ground-level as they took their first steps into the sacred built landscape of the sanctuary and as they engaged with preparatory purification rituals at the fountains associated with the ramps. These fountains provided moments in which the visitor could begin to communicate with or adjust their bodies to the divine world that the sanctuary made available, cleansing themselves appropriately.

This suggests that ascending the ramps was more than a practical means of entering the sanctuary; it was instead a multisensory and kinaesthetic act that directly engaged people in the ritualised activities that they had come to perform, even if these would culminate elsewhere in the sanctuary complex. In this way the ramps began to incorporate their bodies into the religious ways of being that were required of them. Moreover, the ramps were a means through which people could produce and sustain their highly personal or proximal understanding of the religious world of the sanctuary via their own bodily experiences of living it. The ways in which the materialness of the ramps affected the sensing bodies that ascended their pathways indicate that this process involved more than the preparation of a purely cognitive understanding of what it meant to engage in religion, or the readying of a person for what they might encounter when they reached the top. It was, instead, an action that began to situate that religious knowledge in the very body that was living it and which would continue to live it until they departed the sanctuary, as well as during future activities where embodied memories of this experience were evoked. This therefore highlights how the situational production of knowledge might differ in subtle ways from body to body, and from person to person, rather than being a singular form of knowledge shared by all (for more examples of this see Graham forthcoming b).

Assessing the experience of ascending the ramps from the perspective of people with limited or impaired mobility and related conditions, reveals that for some people approaching the gods was inherently difficult, a challenge that once overcome might produce rich rewards, not necessarily in the form of personal healing or a positive oracular consultation, but in terms of producing understandings related to ways of being in the world that brought together both shared knowledge of ritualised activities and their own personal experiences of living them. It was a part of the production of lived religion itself. Of course, negotiating an ascent via the ramps at Praeneste afforded a lived experience of religion that was also felt in the bodies of all visitors, whether able-bodied or disabled, and the materialness of the ramps compelled everyone to move in an unusual and potentially uncomfortable manner. However, until we foreground the physical experience of those whose bodily experiences of movement were already affected by impaired mobility, as I have done here, these observations tend to go unnoticed in favour of interpretations that focus on sight and which assume that the ramps played a primarily practical purpose in providing (presumed easy) access to the sanctuary.

The discussion presented here, nevertheless, begins to demonstrate how an interactional approach which seeks to foreground the lived experience of impairment can have implications beyond the study of ancient disability itself. In short, the observations that it prompts are relevant for broader understandings of how the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia was experienced as a religious place across the whole somatic spectrum, and consequently how religious place contributed to discrete forms of personal religious knowledge. Lived experience of the sanctuary and of the ritualised activities that were performed in relation to it was constituted differently because of the bodies that lived it. This suggests that experiences of impairment certainly will have textured the knowledge that was produced by a visit to the sanctuary, but that these did not necessarily leave impaired individuals with a diminished understanding of religion compared with their non-impaired companions. By incorporating impairment as a potential factor in the ways in which the sensescape of the sanctuary should be analysed, it can be argued even more convincingly that religious experiences and the knowledge that arose from engagement in ritualised practices incorporating engagement with the material world were deeply personalised. Since there could be no single experience of accessing the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, interactional theory not only makes it possible to better understand some of the lived realities of ancient impairment, it also allows that

knowledge to be incorporated into wider debates concerning ancient social and cultural ways of being.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that it is both possible and desirable to adopt an interactional approach to ancient disability, and that doing so has the potential to allow both sensory archaeologies and ancient disability studies to flourish in new and exciting ways. Not least among these is the encouragement it brings to foreground the diversity of potential ancient lived experiences of being in the physical material world and the ways in which these, in turn, encourage novel ways of approaching much broader and more long-standing areas of scholarship concerning ancient cultural forms and practices, such as religious experience. At the same time, the perspectives offered by sensory archaeologies make it possible to begin identifying and thinking more critically about how those people with disabilities and impairments encountered and experienced particular places and activities, rather than just how those people themselves were encountered and experienced by society. Indeed, the example of the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, and the approach that I have taken to it, has revealed as much about the similarities of abled and disabled experiences of the sanctuary as it has highlighted the differences, supporting the conclusions of Christian Laes (2018, p. 173) who has argued that for Roman society ‘the involvement of people with disabilities was perfectly normal.’ Since both texts and archaeology lead us to this same conclusion, it is time to give their experiences equal weight in our analysis of the worlds in which these people lived. Doing so means that it is necessary to start considering how the lived experience of being disabled may have varied across the somatic spectrum of difference, not merely in order to gain a wider and more diverse perspective on the communities of antiquity, but because asking such questions logically leads to more nuanced understandings of ways of being within those communities themselves. I have argued that ancient sanctuaries offer a valuable testing ground for this approach because evidence attests the uncontested presence at such locations of people with differing mobility and sensory impairments, and the brief case study presented here seeks to capitalise on existing knowledge of these sites. However, the potential disabled and impaired people whose experiences I have highlighted did much more with their lives than just visit sanctuaries. The next challenge is to identify other situations, other places, other activities, in which we might apply the same approach. Doing so will mean that our sensory reconstructions become significantly enhanced, nuanced, and inevitably more complicated in line with the complex realities of real human lived

experiences, at the same time as our understanding develops of the real world agency of those with bodily and sensory impairments in the shaping of their social and cultural worlds.

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