

CLASSICAL

Robin Osborne, *The Transformation of Athens: Painted Pottery and the Creation of Classical Greece*. pp. 304, 20 col. + 80 b/w ills. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2018. ISBN 978-0-69117-767-0, hardcover £40.

The preface sets out the book's ambitious aim to rewrite the history of Greek Classical art, Greek Classical pottery, and to write history with the help of pottery. The watchword is change. The volume is subdivided into three large sections denoted by Roman numerals, these consist of two or more continuously numbered subsections (first chapter of section II is confusingly II.3), further subdivisions such as "Were They Pushed or Did They Jump" do not appear in the table of contents. This is not a modest book, the extensive bibliography contains more than double the number of publications by the author than those of J. Beazley and J. Boardman combined.

I. The Art of Transformation, presents a brief history of the study and development of style in Greek art and postulates that art changes the viewer, provides the briefest summary of the development of the style of Greek pottery and sculpture, and argues against a mere development from stylized to naturalistic representations, and postulates that the objects themselves created change: placing large pots on graves inspired artists to paint funerary scenes, and myth on funerary monuments evolved as an illustration of individual struggles with mortality. The author also explains the choice of object for the study: Athenian figure decorated pottery has survived in large quantities, is decorated with detailed scenes, and can be dated with accuracy. A second chapter deals with the pottery, providing an informed summary of the history of study of painters in the tradition of Beazley, and subjects, and sets out that the author will largely neglect painters, perhaps a mistake, since the distinction of painters permits the recognition of personal choice and workshop traditions. Three peculiarities noted by the author are the absence of copies, ignoring the thousands of identical Classical black-figure lekythoi with goddesses mounting chariots, Herakles, and Theseus; the imbalance of find-places, and the use of the same shapes and often the same scenes in three distinct contexts: domestic, religious and funerary. Osborne also sets out that he is following the old-fashioned opinion that Athenian vases were painted with subjects suited to Athenian

tastes and voraciously acquired abroad because of their quality (he appears to place the Pronomos vase from Ruvo in Apulia in an Etruscan context), a view the reviewer agrees with unless there are clear indications of adaptations of shapes and/or subjects to foreign tastes, but it is probable that Athenian vase-painters strove to produce a range of images that was acceptable everywhere.

II investigates the development of the images of athletes, warriors, courtship, and the world of the symposium, amongst others (the chapter headings occasionally annoyingly whimsical). Osborne's arguments are supported by well-chosen images, but for once, graphs and statistics placing the subjects in numerical context would have been welcome to ascertain the typicality of the evidence, since the large, high-quality vases of the red-figure Pioneers seem to be dominated by scenes of warfare and athletics. The section on sex includes divine pursuit scenes, with Eos interpreted as an exploration of female sexuality; the traditional funerary interpretation is not included. Brief summaries of the findings for each topic would have been welcome. In the final overview, Osborne observes a tendency in his chosen subjects from many performing protagonists to fewer, rather more static figures, and divines political trends from the changing imagery. Here in particular, a closer study of changing markets and the needs of large-scale production would have been welcome, and one occasionally wonders whether the author projects his extensive historical knowledge onto painted vases.

The volume concludes with "The Road not Taken", studies of the Krition Boy and the Tyrannicides, and a "History of Myth".

THOMAS MANNACK
BEAZLEY ARCHIVE, OXFORD
thomas.mannack@beazley.ox.ac.uk

Nikolas Dimakis, *Social identity in the classical and hellenistic northern Peloponnese: the evidence from burials*. pp. ix + 357, 111 figs (7 in col.). Oxford: Archaeopress, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78491-506-3, paperback £40; 978 1 78491 507 0, E-book £16.

This meticulously researched volume by Nikolas Dimakis (hereinafter D.) is based on the author's Nottingham doctoral thesis from 2012, supervised