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".

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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

by W. G. Cavanagh.[1] The main text of 79 pages, comprising six closely printed chapters (in standard Archaeopress two-column format) of between 11 and 14 pages each and a 5-page Conclusion, is complemented by a 30-page Bibliography of some 1,200 items. This is followed by 83 pages of Figures (nos 10 and 25–30 being in colour), mainly bar charts together with maps, site plans, tables, and landscape views. Appendix A (pp. 183–215) is a complete tabulation of the primary data set for 'Groups of burials'; appendix B (pp. 216–357) does the same for 'Individual graves'. These vast tables present all conceivable data about burials, comprising multiple aspects of their physical layout as well as any artefactual contents or anthropological remains.

It is indeed admirable that D. includes his raw data, particularly since, as he discusses in the Introduction (ch. 1; pp. 1–13), the publication record of burials in the Peloponnese (5th to 2nd centuries BC) is extremely imperfect. His synthesis, as such, breaks new ground at every juncture. He excludes what might be called the late Hellenistic period (1st century BC) on the grounds that datable graves from those years are very sparse (no doubt because of the, as yet, imperfectly understood chronology of ceramics at the so-called Hellenistic–Roman transition). He has chosen not to cover Messenia and Laconia for similar reasons, observing that they 'require a separate treatment due to the enigmatic nature of their burial evidence' (1 n. 1). This, too, is a justifiable choice in the present state of knowledge, doubtless because of the problem of adequately understanding the ill-defined and changing relationships between political communities across Lakonike (Spartan-dominated territory) as a whole, both during and after the main period of Spartan hegemony down to the 360s, 338/7 (in the case of the coastal towns of Messenia), or various later dates (in the case of different parts of Laconia). An important feature of D.'s approach to the data is the inclusion of graves 'without offerings' (9).

After historical and geographical outlines and a literature review—which includes the memorable aphorism '[i]t can crudely be said that the more complex a past society, the less research has been devoted to its cemeteries' (6)—the introduction offers a thoughtful and widely documented theoretical reflection on the interpretation of funerary remains. Emphasis is laid upon 'the social construction of time, space, and material culture as constituent of social being' (8) and on the importance of recognizing the specificity of the archaeological record in different localities and regions, so that we do not fail in 'touching upon the real archaeological experience of dealing with actual objects' (10) or ignore non-archaeological (i.e. written) evidence for specific variations between cultures. These are welcome observations, given the unique and pivotal nature of the Peloponnese within Greek history and archaeology, composed as the peninsula is of strongly defined culture regions whose identities were maintained and invested in with limited alteration for over a millennium, from (and probably long before) the era of Homer's 'Catalogue of Ships' down to at least the late antique period.[2] The discussions of the problematic notion of 'identity' (7–8) and of the different phenomena gathered under the term 'variation' (10–12) will be worthwhile reading for any Classical archaeologist.

With chapter 2 (14–25) we move to a detailed case study, the Argolid. Here D. identifies a peak of cemetery numbers in the late Classical period, slightly in advance of the high point of rural settlement numbers. (All such statements rely on the unavoidable assumption that the relative numbers of datable artefacts are representative of each period, and that we have not failed to recognize whole groups of ceramic forms and fabrics that could belong to specific periods; not to mention the intractable problems of assessing the variable fragility and use duration of ceramic vessels of different kinds.) D. makes important observations about the inter-visibility of cemeteries and extra-mural settlements, and the placing of some cemeteries along roads. Most importantly, he detects a difference in burial locations as between the western and eastern Argolid (broadly between the Argive plain and the Akte), and a move from a dominant cist-grave fashion peaking in the late Classical period to a 'more heterogeneous mortuary record in the Hellenistic' (18). This increased variation in burial practice, he suggests, may reflect 'growing social differentiation (20) which is more clearly visible in larger centres (21–2). Like a number of historical studies of the Greek world in the past two decades, D. identifies the Hellenistic period as one in which the 'uneven distribution of wealth' (25) becomes more intense. The lessons

[1] I apologise for the delay in the appearance of this review. I was first contacted by the journal in March 2020, whereupon the Covid-19 pandemic led to unavoidable delays.

[2] I therefore regret having been unaware of the volume, and of the author's PhD dissertation, as I made final revisions to my volume *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese: Politics, Economies, and Networks 338–195 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). D.'s ample discussions of specific regions and *poleis* societies, if compared with those in my book, may well sharpen the resolution of the pictures I painted, or cause them to be modified. They will certainly enrich the understanding of social formations in individual communities.

learned from the Argolid are taken forward into the remaining chapters.

Chapter 3 (26–36) demonstrates important findings about the locations, spatial, and social organization of funerary sites, in which the north-western and north-eastern Peloponnese display different characteristics. Perhaps most tellingly, the appearance of continuity between Classical and Hellenistic times masks variation in the degree to which earlier grave sites are reused or overlaid with new ones, which suggests changes in the importance placed on ancestry and local history (35–6). Chapter 4 (37–48) notes the prevalence of inhumation over cremation burial, the latter being relatively rare other than in the Argolid, Achaia, and Triphylia. Again it is the 'growing social divide' (43) that catches the eye. In aspects such as this, the study of burial data has much to say about intra-regional homogeneity and inter-regional variation. Chapter 5 (pp. 49–62) demonstrates the increased use of perfume and oil containers in the Hellenistic era, and examines the varying visibility across both study periods of sub-groups such as women, children, and hoplites. All this has the potential to deepen our understanding of Peloponnesian communities gained from historical sources and epigraphy. Finally, chapter 6 (63–75) considers burial ritual in the context of myths and religious beliefs, and shows the persistence of apotropaic items of material culture and the influence of belief in an after-life. The Conclusion condenses the findings of the main chapters with an emphasis on the shift over time from more communal to more individual ways of approaching funerary ritual.

A review cannot do justice to the range and effectiveness with which this volume covers all conceivable aspects of Peloponnesian funerary culture in the Classical and Hellenistic Peloponnese.[3] It is a remarkable testimony to how the minute and rigorous analysis of archaeological remains, taking account of prior knowledge of landscape and wider historical evidence, can yield real results for our understanding of social relations. It is to be hoped that the lessons delivered by the many important sections within chapters will actively be woven into future historians' reconstruction of Peloponnesian societies and their development. I expect this study to have an extensive legacy—provided both archaeologists and historians are open to understanding each other's approaches as well as this author does.

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[3] The volume is highly readable, though more active copy-editing would have ironed out some slips, typical of Greek-speakers writing in English: for example, in the omission of the definite article in certain contexts, or the evident difficulty of choosing the correct preposition or auxiliary verb. In footnotes where long sequences of author–date citations are grouped by region, it would have helped the eye to put region names in bold (e.g. 6 n. 84; 9 n. 118). An unnecessary 'not' remains at p. 4, col. i, line 24.

Simon Elliott, *Ancient Greeks at War: Warfare in the Classical World from Agamemnon to Alexander.* pp. 288, with 134 col. ills, 8 double-page col. maps, 5 col. battle-plans. Oxford & Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2021. ISBN 978-1-61200-998-8, hardback £30; 978-1-61200-999-5, E-book £12.99.

This book is one of a series concentrating on what is essentially military history, focusing on particular societies (the author has written other books in the series; four are cited in the Selective Bibliography). The Introduction claims that it is a "*tour de force* covering every aspect of warfare in the ancient Greek world" (p. 7 – a rather remarkable claim to make about one's own book), but goes on to state that it covers "military strategy, tactics and technology as they evolved over three millennia", thus apparently bypassing highly important questions such as what part warfare played in Greek society at different periods and why and how often wars were fought. This raises the question, what is the intended readership for this book?

The lavish colour illustrations, which include photographs of painted figurines, often massed in formations, to give an impression of different types of battle array, and many depictions of particular types of warrior, often shown in imagined scenes of fighting at a particular battle, might well suit a wargaming readership. But I cannot help feeling that wargamers would be bored by the detailed coverage in Ch. 3 of the political developments in the 4th century BC during which Philip II of Macedon achieved dominance in mainland Greece, and in Ch. 5 of the struggles of Alexander's successors against each other and, eventually, against the rising power of Rome, although the account of Alexander the Great's career in Ch. 4, with its detailed analysis of his four greatest battles, might well appeal. But I expect that they would like more discussion of the topics covered rather belatedly in Ch. 6, on "The Military Systems of Classical and Hellenistic Greece", where