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- Matthew P. Maher. *The fortifications of Arkadian city states in the Classical and Hellenistic periods*. pp. xiii, 426, 155 b/w illustrations. 2017. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978–0–19–878659–7 hardback £90/\$125.00. 978–0–19–109021–9 e-publication £85.50 /\$124.99.**

Matthew Maher's monograph on the fortifications of Arkadian city states is (although not mentioned in the book) based on a PhD dissertation at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver) in 2012. It is a very welcome volume, because it supplies the growing interest in both the history and archaeology of Arkadia as a central Greek region and in ancient fortifications in a regional scope. As Maher writes in his introduction, he sees his study in the light of the 'move away from traditional stereotypical interpretations of a poor and isolated Arkadia towards a view of a moderately prosperous region whose inhabitants generally followed the same patterns of social, political, and cultural development seen elsewhere in ancient Greece' (p. 1) – a move that only can be appreciated.

The book starts with an introduction (pp. 1–16), including subchapters on aims, sources and evidence, previous research on Greek fortifications, Arkadian regional focus, the chronological range, limitations of the study, methodology and the organisation of the book. As for the aims (p. 3), the book's overall objective is 'a comprehensive and detailed survey

of the historical development of Greek military architecture and defensive planning specifically in Arkadia from the Classical period to the Roman arrival in Greece'. The collected data are supposed to meet five primary objectives: an accurate chronology of the fortifications, an understanding of their relation to the local topography, a detailed catalogue of the fortified Arkadian poleis, a regional synthesis and the connection of the observed patterns to historical reasoning. The main sources for the study are previous archaeological research and personal observations, but also written sources and historical research (pp. 3–5).

Maher's section on the research history of Greek fortifications (pp. 5–8) includes nearly exclusively general studies on Greek fortifications, while important conference volumes, some of which have been landmarks in the study of ancient fortifications, are missing.¹ The surprised reader is also told that the author only knows of two studies of fortifications on a regional scope (the ones of Catherine Typaldou-Fakiris on Phokis and of Nadia Coutsinas on Crete),² while he does not seem to be acquainted with e.g. the various publications of Claire Balandier on different regions, the excellent studies of Sylvian Fachard on the territory of Eretria and of Judith Ley on Akarnanian fortifications, the work of Elke Richter on the Triphylian fortifications (which is particularly critical, as Triphyly became a part of Arkadia in the early 4th c. BC, see below), with Yannis Lolos' documentation of the fortifications in the territory of Sikyon and with Mikko Suha's regional studies in Thesprotia, only to mention some important examples.³ The regret that 'although it appears that the advantages of studying fortifications on a regional level have long been recognized, little has been done to advance the discipline in this regard' is repeated in the section on the Arkadian regional focus (p. 8). Surprise is just as high when there is no mention of recent work on fortifications in general, for instance the two books of the international network on ancient fortifications 'Fokus Fortifikation' including also several chapters and articles on the regional study of fortifications.⁴

¹ Most importantly Leriche and Treziny 1986.

² Typaldou-Fakiris 2004; Coutsinas 2013.

³ Balandier 2002, 2016; Fachard 2012; Ley 2009, 2010; Richter 2014, 2015; Lolos 2011, 181–267; Suha 2009, 2011, 2016.

⁴ Muth *et al.* 2016; Frederiksen *et al.* 2016. If the reason for this neglect is that the author handed in his manuscript before the publication of these volumes (in December 2015 and February 2016), he could always have consulted the preliminary results (including regional studies on different levels) on the network's homepage. (The reader may forgive me for mentioning this lack, having been one of the directors of this network.)

That the chronological scope (pp. 9–11) does not start with the Archaic period is due to the fact that there are no extant remains of fortifications that can undoubtedly be dated to these times (pp. 9–10), although one would not necessarily agree with the author's statement that the dawn of the fortified polis in Arkadia therefore is to be dated to the Classical period, considering the fact that old walls can be quite elusive. Concerning the limitations of the study (pp. 11–13), the fact that Triphylian fortifications are left out is justified with Triphyly having become part of Arkadia only in the early 4th c. BC, although it was said before that 4th- and 3rd-c. BC fortifications form the bulk of the study anyway (p. 10). Furthermore, the author's statement that Arkadian extra-urban fortifications 'would not significantly contribute to the overall focus of this book – that is, the fortifications of Arkadian poleis themselves' (p. 11) is not acceptable as such. The principal misunderstanding here concerns the meaning of polis, which as a very well-known fact does not only consist of a main settlement, but also of its territory around. Like this, the fortifications of a polis per definition include those of the main settlement as well as its hinterland. And a regional study of fortifications should normally include both, city-walls as well as extra-urban fortifications, in order to get the whole picture and to be able to interpret regional relations and concerns in fortification properly. In this sense, the title of the book is misleading.

Concerning methodology (pp. 13–15), the author expresses a most welcome critical attitude towards masonry forms as dating criteria and favours a holistic approach, including all sorts of available evidence for establishing chronologies. One would, however, have wished for a more thorough discussion of the doubtful reliability of different dating methods (except from excavation) and some detailed information on the methods of on-site data collection, documentation and study.

The main part of the book consists of two components, the first part being somewhat curiously captioned 'Methodology', although it is a synthesis of the development of fortifications in general and Arkadian fortifications in particular, the second part being a catalogue. The first part starts with a chapter on 'Arkadia, City Walls and the Polis' (pp. 19–29). Here, proper historic-geographical maps would have been important; the very simple map on p. 21 (Fig. 1.1), where rivers and borders almost cannot be told apart, and the Google Earth map on p. 24 (Fig. 1.2), which does not provide enough information and is not easily legible as to its geographical features, are not adequate. Maher's

thoughts on the Arkadian *polis* are based on the Copenhagen Polis Centre's excellent work on Greek *poleis* in general and Thomas Heine Nielsen's book on Arkadian *poleis*,⁵ which are undoubtedly the best authorities in this question. It would nevertheless have been valuable to discuss if the results of the present study match the picture or if fortifications can contribute any new details to the definition of *polis* status. In chapter 2 on 'Arkadian Fortification Types and Construction' (pp. 30–43), we learn that from the beginning, defensibility obviously was the main motive for the choice of site (p. 31). Arkadian city walls are classified into three geographical types, which do not show any sequential evolution: the 'acropolis type', the 'horizontal type' (the only examples being Mantinea and Tegea) and the mixed 'uneven type' (pp. 32–33). The discussion of building materials and construction techniques (pp. 34–36) is limited to the choice between mudbrick and stone as building materials, while there is no discussion of the differences in stone materials and their implications, e.g. on masonry forms and construction techniques. Other practical construction issues, for instance the employment of different workshops with various backgrounds and their implications on construction techniques and typology of the individual components are not included either. The sections on masonry (pp. 38–43) are informed by the great and traditional misconception that masonry forms are the product of chosen 'styles' and not – as in the vast majority of cases – dictated by practical conditions of the available material. For this reason, the term 'masonry styles' is generally inadequate here. The author's initial criticism of dating through masonry forms is unfortunately non-committal, he still accepts Scranton's outdated study from 1941 as a valuable base or develops his own chronological thoughts on the base of masonry 'styles'.

Although for most of the flanking buildings of Arkadian walls, it cannot be determined if they were towers or open platforms (which is nowhere even mentioned), the discussion of the flanking buildings in chapter 3 on the 'Tactical Development of the Constituent Parts of City Walls' (pp. 44–60) is limited to towers (pp. 47–48), not including any other sorts of flanking devices like open platforms, wall projections or jogs. As to gates, defining courtyard gates as their own category (called 'gatecourt' type) next to frontal (axial) and overlap (tangential) gates (pp. 49–50) is a good idea, but it would still have been important to sub-differentiate within this type between frontal and overlap concepts, as these result in clearly different architectural

forms. As for the development of fortifications in answer to the spread of catapults in the 4th c. BC (pp. 55–60), one misses a discussion of the changes in embrasures and the addition of second storeys of towers as major aspects of this development. The notion that the balance between attackers and defenders of a wall was more or less even (p. 60) is not the predominant scholarly opinion: normally a far greater advantage is seen on the defender's side.⁶ In general, chapters 2 and 3 provide some valuable information for the study, but are in their essential parts too much summaries of fortification handbooks without including specific knowledge of individual sites. The characteristics of Arkadian fortifications, which should have formed the main body of the whole first part of the book, appear too often only in the form of ancillary remarks.

In chapter 4, which is a 'Topographical, Architectural and Historical Analysis', Arkadian city walls are finally taken into focus. We learn for instance that there is a roughly even distribution of fortified cities over the inhabitable areas of Arkadia (p. 61), which – not surprisingly – at the level of the individual site nevertheless is a product of local topography (pp. 65–67). At least one of three natural defensive variables is exploited by all sites: elevated terrain included in the circuit, surrounding mountains or local watercourses (p. 67). The mountainous Arkadian landscape did not allow otherwise, anyway. It is, however, noteworthy that every walled city relies on some watercourse protecting at least one of its flanks (pp. 69–70). Although the masonry forms of the curtains are nowhere consistent, Maher detects 'interesting spatial and chronological patterns' in their distribution (pp. 74–75), which at a closer look are not well enough supported by examples, though, and should be reduced to a general prevalence of polygonal over trapezoidal forms throughout all phases. That 'proximity appears to have played a role in the type of masonry employed' (p. 75), if true at all, would as well be linked to this fact, but would first and foremost have to do with the geological similarity of the stone material used, a factor which is totally neglected – nevertheless, the circuits using predominantly trapezoidal forms do not seem to follow any geographical rule. Concerning chronological patterns, the fact that most of the fortifications are not dated in a reliable way makes Maher's attempts quite uncertain from the beginning. As to towers, the observation that round tower shapes only appear in larger circuits of the uneven or horizontal types (although dependent on the preservation of tower remains) might to a lesser degree be explained by the accessibility of these

⁵ Nielsen 2002.

⁶ Ducrey 1986; Müth *et al.* 2016, 3.

sites from many directions, as assumed by Maher (p. 79) – dead angles at rectangular towers being easily reduced by the right forms of openings – than by the more elaborated and expensive construction, which could be borne more easily by larger poleis, a fact that is not considered. That the regular spacing of towers mostly replaces the strategic spacing around the late 5th/early 4th c. BC is a clear tendency, but cannot be called the ‘general rule’ (p. 82), as Kleitor and Theisoa Karkalou are clear exceptions (Table 4.3). Most of the other observed patterns regarding towers seem to be supported by too few examples.

Also in the case of gates, the discerned patterns are not always convincing. That five of seven examples of frontal gates were constructed in polygonal masonry (p. 85) would rather have to do with the general prevalence of polygonal masonry forms in Arkadia than with the polygonal masonry granting this vulnerable gate type an impression of strength – quite a debatable presumption in itself. In the particular case of gate B in Gortys, where the rest of the circuit shows predominately trapezoidal forms, this has to be seen in connection with the fact that its blocks are considerably larger than usual in this circuit, which could indicate a change in raw material. In any case the size of the blocks would be much more important for the impression of strength than the masonry form. The established geographical and chronological patterns (pp. 85–86) seem difficult to hold due to the limited number of preserved examples, although it seems reasonable that courtyard gates as the most monumental and costly gate type only appear in the largest Arkadian settlements. For the Arkadian gate in Messene, which is used as a main comparative example, Maher unfortunately uses the date suggested by Scranton in 1941 (late 4th/early 3rd c. BC), obviously not being aware of this having been contradicted many times and by new research and publications on the city wall of Messene from 2004 onwards.⁷ That acropolis-type fortifications almost exclusively use frontal gates and do not make more use of overlap gates sounds surprising (pp. 85, 87), but could be a particularly Arkadian choice, if not due to the state of preservation. The ‘ramp gate’ appears here quite suddenly as a fourth type (p. 87), without having been introduced in the corresponding section in chapter 3 and without been properly characterized and distinguished from the other types. For posterns (pp. 87–90), the same reservation of only accidentally preserved or known remains is valid. The fact that posterns are mostly not marked in the maps of the catalogue

makes it difficult to use them for following the text. The defensive role of posterns is overestimated in some cases, for instance concerning the two posterns at Phigaleia (89), which lie on a high and steep ridge and not in the proximity to any possible lines of approach, i.e. in a part of the circuit that – against the opinion of the author – cannot be considered as particularly vulnerable. Outworks are rare in Arkadian fortifications (pp. 90–91), the only examples being known at Phigaleia and Mantinea.

It appears a bit astonishing that the ‘Chronological Summary’ (pp. 91–93) is presented in the form of notes, although this provides a certain clarity. The following section about ‘Historical Probability’ (pp. 93–97) discussing the different fortifications in their proposed historical context is characterized by some good reasoning. The Arkadian League is seen as a major catalyst for a boom in fortification building in the early 4th c. BC (pp. 94–95), although the individual reasons of cities to fortify themselves should never be underestimated and could have been considered to a higher degree. An explanation for the fortification of several sites that were already voted to participate in the *synoikismos* of Megalopolis is convincingly found in a strategic change of plan (pp. 95–96). Further factors are justifiably seen in threats to inner security by Orchomenos and its allies on the one hand and in a peaceful relation to Elis on the other hand. It is to be appreciated that the author advises caution about concluding on one grand defensive strategy. A regrettable flaw is nevertheless that the literature used again is not up to date. Concerning one of the central points in this section, Epameinondas’ supposed influence on the foundation and fortification of Mantinea and Megalopolis closely together with Messene, Maher does not seem to be acquainted with the legitimately critical views on this theory, in 2014 supported by James Roy with more arguments.⁸ Moreover, there is a certain danger of circular argument in this section, as the dates of some walls have been established using historical arguments or the development of siege warfare.

Chapter 5 (‘The Fortifications of Arkadian City States’: pp. 98–101) finally is a short summary of the main results of the study. The first ten lines of this chapter represent, strangely enough, an exact copy of the start of the section ‘Arkadian Regional Focus’ on p. 8, as has already been noted by another reviewer⁹ – in this way the wrong statement that there has not been done much research yet in terms of regional studies of fortifications is unfortunately

⁷ Müth 2010, 2014, Müth *et al.* 2016, 278–85; Giese 2010, Schwertheim 2010.

⁸ Demand 1990, 107–119; Roy 2014.

⁹ Rönnlund 2018.

repeated a third time. Also the conclusion that it appears that the region of Arkadia was 'a moderately prosperous one whose inhabitants followed generally the same patterns of social, political, and cultural development seen elsewhere in ancient Greece' is quasi a literal copy of a passage in the introduction (p. 1).

The catalogue (pp. 103–394) with its 19 entries comprises by far the largest part of the book. The entries are composed of sections on location, *polis* status, history, local topography, natural defences, fortification type, preservation, construction, a summary of tactical components, comments, a section on the overall defensive planning, a chronological summary, chronological arguments and a bibliography. This enables an integrative approach, and the reader learns about many interesting details here, which for a good part were not easily accessible until now. It is evident that a great amount of work has been dedicated to this part of the book, and by collecting all sorts of scattered information around these important Arkadian city walls and by presenting them all together in an organized manner it constitutes one of the main merits of the study.

There is a lack, however, of more detailed information on many levels, for instance on the precise localisation and size of the settlements within the walls, on the state of preservation of the individual parts of the circuits, on constructional and architectural characteristics (e.g. rock varieties used, stone dressing, locking possibilities of gates or posterns etc.) The number and quality of illustrations is not satisfactory either: the topographical and fortification maps – often printed in too small, not well-readable or even (in the case of Fig. C8.4/ p. 220: Mantinea) illegible size – do not show enough details, and many place names or important wall features are not marked on them. Moreover, one would have wished for many more photographs illustrating important features of the individual walls, for instance of parts for which different chronologies are proposed. The presented pictures are sometimes not informative, as it is for example the case with fig. C8.5 (p. 221: Mantinea), where hardly more than one block layer can be distinguished between high grass.

The contributions would also have benefitted much from more thorough autopsy: in some cases, it is very evident that the author has not been all around the circuit, but merely discusses the opinions of other researchers, which is for instance the case in Phigaleia, where the possible location of gates in the southwest has not been checked personally

(p. 303 with n. 39), in Megalopolis, where he relies on information of the Ephorate about no remains of the walls being visible today (p. 236 n. 28), and in Mantinea, where he was not able to find the polygonal portions, although some are clearly extant and accessible without difficulties (for instance adjacent to gate G in the southeast). Had he seen them personally, he would have observed that they are harmoniously interwoven with the trapezoidal parts and therefore do not hold at all as remains of an older phase, as proposed (pp. 228–229). Moreover, they are just as high as the trapezoidal sectors, i.e. too high for any mudbrick superstructure to have been inundated in 385 BC by the Spartans. As in this case, also in others chronological arguments are again too often based on masonry forms and thus cannot bear up, for instance Theutis (pp. 357–359) or Gortys, where typological indications for a later date are dismissed in favour of stylistic dating (p. 181). The theory of the original circuit there having already included the 'South Fort', which in that way would never have been an independent unit (pp. 184–185), is on the contrary convincing.

More comparisons to fortifications from other regions would have enriched the study enormously. One of the few comparanda named is Messene, but this is based on outdated information and literature and used in a too general way for comparative dating (e.g. in the case of Phigaleia, p. 309). It is sometimes a bit difficult to follow the tactical reasoning, as for instance in the case of 'Tower 2' of the 'South Fort' of Gortys (p. 179), where the possibility of oblique openings is not taken into consideration when characterizing it as useless for flanking, or in Phigaleia, where there is inconsistency in the description of the main approaches to the city in the text and Fig. C14.8 (pp. 306–307) and where there is no discussion of the surprising fact that flanking structures are only to be found in the north-western sector. It is very obvious that these structures were all aligned along the most important approach to the city from the area of Megalopolis, while other, equally or even more endangered areas have not been protected by a single tower, which clearly proves their representative function in addition to their defensive purpose.

Concerning form and style of the book, it is a solid bind with a handsome print, the familiar high quality of Oxford University Press publications. Lists of figures and tables, the bibliography and the index provide a good usability. The texts are generally well-written and easy to read, although characterized throughout by all too many repetitions and gratuitous literal quotes. The use of Greek instead of anglicized forms of ancient names

is pleasing. The first part of the book includes some helpful tables and 3D-reconstructions made by the author. A very welcome supplement to the catalogue is the 'Appendix of Other Attested Fortified Arcadian *Poleis*', offering valuable information and bibliographies on sites the evidence for which is not as clear as for the ones included in the catalogue.

All in all, Maher's book certainly enhances the knowledge of city walls in Arkadia, a great part of which were only poorly known before, and assigns them a deserved place in archaeology. In this way, the goal to help revising the picture of a remote and underdeveloped Arkadia and lift it into the scope of an ordinary Greek region is attained. Besides this, strong points of the book are the intense discussions of the relation between fortifications and topography and the detailed tactical considerations.

Fortifications, however, offer a lot more levels of information and interpretation, and here the chance has been missed to fully exploit the scope: the relation of the fortifications to their material resources (stone varieties and quarries, mudbrick production), practical aspects of the building process (workforce, building procedure, investment) as well as non-defensive functions like urbanistic and representative or other symbolic functions have been totally left out. Even the regional aspects have not been fully deployed, being hampered by the exclusion of extra-urban fortifications, which would have allowed for an integrative investigation of interrelations and communications. Comparisons to other regional fortification patterns have not been tried at all, which deprives the study of one of its main potentials.

The methods of investigation would have gained considerably by more thorough autopsy, by more detailed architectural study and by the application of modern tools like GIS and viewshed analysis. The lack of detailed and up-to-date literature is deplorable; in lieu thereof, the author's veneration of Frederick Winter's study of 1971, which was of hallmark value in its time, but today is outdated in quite some aspects, is very obvious. The great old handbooks and overviews of the 1970s¹⁰ represent the principal and often the only actors in the notes throughout, where new studies should have been consulted – the rather popular-scientific work of Fields 2006 is not adequate to replace them. Ancient sources are employed to a welcome degree; an adequate source criticism, however, would have added to their value. An important issue is that many results of the study, although apparently

consistent, are based on the chronology of the single fortifications, which remains unreliable.

Nevertheless, although it has missed quite some of its chances Maher's study is still an important collection of information on Arkadian fortifications and as such forms a decent base for further research on the topic.

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¹⁰ Next to Winter: Lawrence 1979; McNicoll 1997, which is based on a PhD dissertation from 1971.

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Histories of ancient painting

Jerome J. Pollitt (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Painting in the Classical World*. pp. xxii+477, 237 b/w illustrations, 140 colour plates, 6 maps, CD-ROM. 2014. New York: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-86591-3 hardback £190, US\$250.

Reconstructing a single coherent history of painted images over almost two and a half millennia and across a wide variety of cultural contexts in the Mediterranean and Europe is a daunting task, especially today, at a time when the notions of diversity and multiplicity play a crucial role in the study of classical antiquity. The editor Jerome J. Pollitt introduces this study as the first attempt, after Mary Hamilton Swindler's 1929 *Ancient Painting*,¹ to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date survey of

¹ Swindler 1929.