

and Bourbou highlights how a multidisciplinary approach supported and articulated by innovative technologies, as exemplified by the Kymissala Archaeological Research Project on Rhodes, allows progress on traditional core questions.

All in all, *Classical Archaeology in Context* is the first (hand)book of its kind. This volume clearly demonstrates that, if we want to use archaeological data as a proper historical source, it is necessary to purge them from pre-existing interpretations and reconsider them in their original context, at site, landscape or regional scale. It also illustrates the wide range of nature of archaeological data and gives actual methods to record and interpret these. This book will surely inspire historians and archaeology practitioners and can help to develop a best practice guide in our field.

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Hellenistic

John Boardman. *The Greeks in Asia*. pp. 240, 208 illustrations, 50 in colour. 2015. London: Thames and Hudson. ISBN 978-0-50025-213-0 hardback £32.

Elisabeth Katzy. *Hellenisierung Nordmesopotamiens am Beispiel des Khabur-Gebietes (Vorderasiatische Forschungen der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 3,IV)* pp. x, 189, 97 Tafeln. 2015. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. ISBN 978-3-44710-377-0 hardback €108.

These two books are underpinned by the same essential theme, Greek influence in Asia, but they are very different. John Boardman is one of the leading historians of Greek art with a record of publication going back over fifty years, Elisabeth Katzy is at the other end of her academic career with this, her first book, a lightly-revised version of her Tübingen PhD thesis. Where Boardman covers the vast expanse from Turkey to China over the course of many centuries, Katzy's focus is much narrower, a particular region of North Mesopotamia during the last three centuries BC. Both, however, make valuable contributions to our understanding of cultural interaction in the East.

Boardman is well-positioned to write this book. He has written on the Greek diaspora and its influence before. It was the subject of one of his earliest books, *The Greeks Overseas: Their Early Colonies and Trade*, first published in 1964 (fourth edition, 1999). The present book looks solely east and for the most part deals with a later period, its subject matter foreshadowed in the fourth chapter of Boardman's *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity* (1994). As with all his books for Thames and Hudson it is a high quality production with over two hundred images, almost a quarter of them in colour, although lacking the convenience of a table of illustrations. There is little in the way of typos, but a new printing might want to correct the date of Ctesias' stay at the Persian court from 500 BC to 400 BC (p. 59). Boardman has written a learned book, displaying an enormous and enviable range, but it is also a rather frustrating one. At just over 200 pages it is very much a survey. This leads to a brevity which does not always help clarity. A single short paragraph on pp. 29-30, for instance, manages to cover relations between Persians and Medes, the character of the Persians, relative cruelty of Persians and Greeks, the

place of women in Persian and Greek society, as well as Persian religion and Zoroastrianism.

The opening chapter explores early Greek relations with the East, roughly between the 9th and 6th centuries BC, and ranges widely from the Black Sea to Al Mina and Phoenicia, with a particular emphasis on the role of the Euboeans. Here as elsewhere in the book much is historical background but the interest lies in Boardman's treatment of the material evidence, whether it is the distinctive size and archaeological value of Greek drinking cups or the adaptation of Greek artistic practices to suit Scythian taste. The second chapter moves onto the sprawling Achaemenid empire that occupied so much of Asia from the 6th to the 4th centuries. In common with other chapters it attempts to cover too much ground and so loses focus. The key section on the influence of Greeks on Achaemenid art (misleadingly entitled 'Greeks in the Persian Empire') could profitably have been expanded, while the final section on Herodotus' story that the Persian Wars had their origins in the Trojan War is rather an awkward appendage. Boardman considers various types of artistic production, both small and large, from finely-crafted seals to monumental architecture. The Greek influence on palace structures such as those at Pasargadae, Susa and Persepolis is particularly striking. In the case of Susa the presence of Greek stonemasons is confirmed by Darius' so-called Foundation Charter, which recorded where in the empire the workmen came from. Especially interesting is Boardman's observation that once established, the Greek styles that found expression in palaces such as Persepolis continued almost unchanged to the end of the empire a hundred and fifty or so years later, despite the radical change in the character of Greek art in the Greek world itself during that time. How is this to be explained? A number of possibilities suggest themselves: native craftsmen who had learned the style and so continued to apply the model that they knew, Greeks who knew otherwise but gave their Persian masters what they wanted, or Greeks whose families had lived within the empire for so long that they had lost touch with the latest trends. Boardman does not say.

Everything changes with Alexander the Great, whose conquest of the Persian Empire enabled Greek culture to move much further East, eventually into India where Heracles, transformed into Vajrapani, made his way into Buddhist art. Yet, in spite of the importance of Alexander to this story the Hellenistic age is something of a problem for Boardman. He is adamant not only that the Macedonians were not Greeks, a controversial position in some quarters,

but that Alexander himself had only a thinnest veneer of Greekness. Boardman acknowledges that he had a Greek tutor but suggests that he probably did not take much notice (evidence: a medieval story of him playing a trick on Aristotle, cited without a source); he also questions how much Greek Alexander actually knew and queries the story that he had a copy of the *Iliad* annotated by Aristotle (p. 53). Alexander's talent lay in conquest and destruction. In destroying what seemed to be the most civilised empire in antiquity Alexander had a lot to answer for, suggests Boardman. The Macedonians were the catalysts for the movement of Greeks and their culture eastwards but apart from that there was little that was admirable about them (pp. 53-55). Boardman is very much the philhellene but his determination to keep Macedonian and Greek culture apart does not always convince, especially once the Hellenistic kingdoms are established. For him the Greeks were commercially-minded, but not imperialist (no mention here of the Athenian empire) and with little liking for monarchy. The Macedonians were the opposite.

Chapter 3, which focuses on Alexander and the Hellenistic period, is very much a transitional chapter, containing more historical overview and less discussion of the art and archaeology. The historical summaries, however, often confuse rather than elucidate; thus on p. 61 the Attalids appear to create their kingdom after Apamea in 188 (rather than half a century earlier), the Macedonian kingdom appears to still exist in 133, albeit no longer independent and free, then rather misleadingly Mithradates VI is called the son of a Persian king without explanation. These are all problems of over-compression, which can be disentangled by those already familiar with the narrative but which are unlikely to help those who most need to know. This chapter, then, despite being central to the book's main theme is also the weakest.

By far the most interesting part of the book is the second half, which sees Boardman move further east to the periphery of the Seleucid empire and into India. This may in part be because its subject matter is less familiar, but also because the focus is more firmly 'archaeological-cum-art-historical'. Chapter 4 treats the Greeks of Bactria with discussion of Ai Khanoum and the temple site at Takht-I Sangin (the 'Temple of the Oxus') and concludes with an extended review of the coinage with some marvellous colour illustrations. Chapter 5 explores not so much the presence of Greeks as their impact beyond regions of Greek occupation, in this case on the nomadic peoples of Central Asia and even as far as China. Given the nomadic character of these peoples the Greek

influence is found especially in metalwork. Chapter 6 turns to India, where Greek culture and the emerging religion of Buddhism come together in fascinating ways, not least with the conversion of the Indo-Greek kings who ruled from Taxila in Gandhara, some 30 km from modern Islamabad. Much of the chapter is devoted to an illuminating and well-illustrated survey of the art of the region over several centuries (in turn, stone palettes, gems and seals, jewellery, silver plate and sculpture), but it is when Boardman pauses to concentrate on particular pieces or themes that he is most engaging, thus his discussion of the development of the *ketos* sea monster and Nereids as a subject for stone palettes. In the final chapter Boardman retraces his steps geographically to consider the Near East after the failure of the Seleucid state, first under the Parthians, then the Sasanians. His aim is still to consider the impact of the Greeks but there is now a further complication: the eastern Mediterranean may be predominantly Greek but it is under Roman rule.

Elisabeth Katzy, in contrast, treats a relatively small area, the Khabor region of North Mesopotamia, lying in what is now northern Syria, from the beginning of Seleucid occupation in 302 until its incorporation into the Parthian empire in the first century BC. Her focus here is on the native settlements rather than any new Seleucid foundations. The monograph is a careful examination of the evidence for Greek influence in the material culture. The sites chosen for study are Tell Halaf (Guzana), Tell Beydar, Tell Barri, Tell al-Hamidiyah, Tell Sheikh Hamad (Magdala) and Tell Arbid. Of these Tell Halaf is probably the most well-known, although for its Aramaic and Assyrian past rather than anything Hellenistic. It was excavated in the early twentieth century by Max von Oppenheim and it is the Oppenheim Foundation that oversees this volume. The impressive finds have had an unlucky history, divided by von Oppenheim between Berlin and Aleppo; one set was hit by a bomb in the Second World War and has only recently been reconstructed, the remainder are now threatened by the current war in Syria, although I understand that they were moved to a safe place at the beginning of the crisis. Excavations at Tell Halaf were recommenced in 2006 after a break of over 75 years, but the present instability in the region has put them on hold since 2011. The emphasis in the more recent excavations has continued to be on the site's Aramaic and Assyrian past, but where earlier archaeological work had tended to hurry through the Hellenistic layers with little regard for their stratigraphy this is not a criticism that can be directed at the renewed excavations. Katzy herself has been working as part of the team on the Hellenistic material.

After a short discussion of the terminology of Hellenisation, Katzy outlines the necessary

background for understanding the region, its geographical location, its history, its population and its place within the Seleucid empire. The region had been a major route centre in earlier times but it was somewhat bypassed under the Seleucids, leaving the local elite to run their own affairs. The bulk of the book is made up of an examination of the archaeological evidence, beginning with a review of the sites from which it is drawn. But it is primarily a study of the pottery, which is meticulously described and analysed with a thorough account of each type and its development. The text is accompanied by almost a hundred pages of plates, again mostly devoted to pottery. I did not find it easy to navigate my way through all this, but that may be because I am something of a pottery novice. The presentation of material is methodical and comprehensive, although perhaps for this reason it does lead to occasional repetition, sometimes even of complete text (compare p. 72 with p. 100).

The key question for Katzy is the extent of Greek influence on these settlements in the new Seleucid world. Her conclusion is that an examination of the material evidence reveals that continuity with Mesopotamian tradition is far more important than any Greek influence that may have resulted from Seleucid rule. Where western styles are adopted it is highly selective and not due so much to intrinsic attractiveness as to the fact that they fulfil local needs. Thus red-glazed ware (as opposed to black) caught on because of its similarity to a local pottery which also had a red coating. There is little pottery decorated with figures, which itself may be significant, but Heracles does appear. Again the explanation would seem to lie with native traditions; Katzy suggests it is the influence of the hero of *Gilgamesh*, while Boardman, who also notes the prevalence of Heracles, draws attention to the Greek hero's identification with the Persian deity Verethragna (although he spells it Verethagna). What makes Katzy's study particularly valuable is the thoroughness of its examination of a relatively small body of material, which offers a counter to the easy generalisations of more superficial accounts of Greek influence.

Together these two volumes give an insight into the way that Greek culture, especially material culture, was adopted and adapted by non-Greek peoples; in some cases it was a passing fashion, in others it was more permanent. Importantly they demonstrate that those who adopted it were highly selective, choosing what suited them and rejecting the rest. The political circumstances too changed with time and place. In the Seleucid empire, for instance, where Greek was the dominant culture, adoption may have been somewhat readier than further east where the Greeks

were on a more equal footing with their non-Greek neighbours. Heracles always was the Greek hero who travelled most and here he appears a metaphor for Greek influence, appearing in various guises as far afield as Persia, India and China.

Boardman, J. 1964. *The Greeks Overseas: Their Early Colonies and Trade*. London: Thames & Hudson.
— 1994. *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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Chavdar Tzochiev. *The Athenian Agora Volume XXXVII. Amphora Stamps from Thasos*. pp. 264, 34 b/w figs, 3 tables, more than 600 cat figs. 2016. New Jersey: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens. ISBN 978-0-87661-237-8 hardback £95.

Chavdar Tzochiev's *Amphora Stamps from Thasos* is an excellent addition to the Athenian Agora Series and an exhaustive study of an important material category, so abundantly attested at the Agora. T's book not only consists of a detailed discussion of the typology and chronology of Thasian amphora stamps but also is an attempt to interpret the distribution of the stamps within a wider socio-economic context. Clearly laid out and expertly presented, the book equally serves as an excellent introduction to amphora stamps from Thasos more generally. The book as such is not only of interest to the amphora stamp specialist but would also appeal to a more general audience interested in the wider socio-economic importance of Thasian amphorae and the practices associated with stamping. T., therefore, succeeds marvellously in presenting and discussing a highly specialist data-set in such a way as to be of interest to specialists and more general readers alike.

Agora XXXVII is composed of six chapters. Chapter 1: *Introduction*; Chapter 2: *The Thasian Stamping System: Overview and Controversies*; Chapter 3: *Study of Engravers' Hands*; Chapter 4: *Chronology*; Chapter 5: *The Thasian Wine Trade and the Athenian Agora: a Quantitative Study*; and Chapter 6: *Catalogue*. The chapters are followed by deposit summaries, concordance of inventory and catalogue numbers and indexes.

Chapter 1 *Introduction* sets out the scope and aims of the work and addresses previous scholarship. T. attempts in this volume to present stamped amphorae fragments from Thasos attested at the Athenian Agora within a wider context, addressing a variety of aspects including chronology, manufacture and economy. A major component of the work consists of refining the dating of the officials named on the stamps. The work is based on a data-set of 723 Thasian stamps attested at Athens (most of which at the Agora). In terms of chronology this collection primarily ranges from the early 4th century BC to the second half of the second century BC. In terms of previous scholarship, T. provides a quick run through of the most important scholarship (of course mentioning the pioneering work by Virginia Grace)¹ and highlights its developmental trajectory. The chapter concludes with a useful overview of the terminology utilised.

In chapter 2, *The Thasian Stamping System: Overview and Controversies*, the stamping system is introduced in considerable detail. This chapter is of particular interest to the non-expert as it serves as a good introduction to stamping practices at Thasos. The nature and background behind the stamping of amphorae is discussed and terms like eponym and fabricant thoroughly explained. The devices or symbols used on the stamps also receive attention. We thus learn that one of the two persons named on Thasian stamps acted as the dating official, the name of the magistrate used to date the batch of products, although the exact nature of its role and involvement in the economic activity of the city remains unclear and open to interpretation. The term fabricant is also meticulously discussed and interpreted as a person involved in the production of amphorae although again its exact nature and role remain speculative. Potential fabricant roles are that of workshop manager, supervisor or master potter. T. considers it unlikely, however, that fabricant denotes workshop owner. Next up are the devices identified on stamps. All manners of pictorial signs are incorporated under this heading ranging from animals to plants to musical instruments and celestial symbols. Our understanding of the rationale behind these devices is again fairly limited but potentially related to religious, political or identity motivations. In the final section of chapter 2 T. addresses the shift from early to late Thasian stamping practice which has traditionally been interpreted as the result of administrative reform, possibly associated with the Macedonian conquest of the city in 340 BC. T. considers the available information and considers that there is no evidence

¹ Grace 1934, 1949