BURIALS AND MACEDONIAN SOCIETY

SALMINEN (E.M.) *Age, Gender and Status in Macedonian Society, 550–300 BCE. Intersectional Approaches to Mortuary Archaeology.* Pp. xvi + 306, b/w & colour figs, b/w & colour ills, colour maps. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024. Cased, £95. ISBN: 978-1-3995-2444-5.

S.'s work offers an insightful and comprehensive analysis of the social structures and dynamics within Macedonian society of the archaic through to the early Hellenistic periods, focusing on the interplay between age, gender and status. S. explores the intricate hierarchies that defined Macedonian society. The author draws from a large database (available to readers on the publisher's website) of over 1,100 graves to illustrate a large-scale picture of Macedonian burial practices.

The book is organised into three parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1–2) lays out the theoretical framework, the research questions, the way in which these will be answered and the evidence studied. Chapter 1 introduces a range of theoretical approaches and discusses the methodology used to connect these frameworks to the Macedonian mortuary evidence. It surveys theoretical approaches to identity and the mortuary record, with feminist and agency theory highlighted as particularly suitable to the study. Chapter 1 also introduces the database that forms the backbone of the analyses, explains some of the analytical methods and the terminology used. Chapter 2 discusses currents within mortuary archaeology that inform many of the approaches selected. The final section outlines the implications of these approaches for the study of Macedonian burials and the specific methods used. Main sites and regions are indicated, and the range of material culture is discussed.

Part 2 (Chapters 3–5) explores three social personae: children, women and men. Literary and historical models are compared with the material record, and while certain core assumptions such as masculinity being associated with warfare and femininity with personal adornment prove true, there are also many divergences. Men were not depicted as being nearly as war-like in death as one might expect, and the importance of military connotations dwindles just as late classical and early Hellenistic armies boom. Women had access to ritual participation, and elite women in some cases were presented with symposiastic goods, suggesting they encroached on the male realm. Children show the greatest variation depending on social class: while poor child burials were the poorest of them all, wealthy ones competed with the absolute richest adult burials. Here M. Golden's 'Children in the Hellenistic Period' (in: L.A. Beaumont, M. Dillon, N. Harrington [edd.], *Children in Antiquity: Perspectives and Experiences of Childhood in the Ancient Mediterranean* [2021]) may have been fruitful to S. On the one hand, the aforementioned tendencies and tenses are well-attested in ancient Greece for the period under study and do not comprise a strictly local/regional phenomenon in Macedonia but rather better-established 'Panhellenic trends' (e.g. see N. Dimakis, *Social Identity and Status in the Classical and Hellenistic Northern Peloponnese: the Evidence from Burials* [2016]). On the other hand, what does not fit well in the customary / typical patterns identified in the book, might have been indicative of atypical practices, for example social outcasts (e.g. Δ. Μποσνάκης, *Κατηφείη και Όνειδος. Ταπεινωμένοι και Καταφρονεμένοι Νεκροί. Αποκλίνουσες ταφικές πρακτικές στον αρχαίο*

ελληνικό κόσμο: μεταξύ νομιζομένων και στέρησης της ταφής [2020]), a case S. does not consider in the analysis.

The final Part 3 (Chapters 6–7) splits the data along different axes and moves from social personae to questions of social organisation and change that cut across space and time. Chapter 6 uses several methods to look at hierarchy, first searching for value, then measuring inequality using the Gini coefficient, and finally looking at tumulus viewsheds to answer questions about the role of landscape in making claims to power. The results point towards persistent inequality that increases after the Archaic period but is better described as a continuum rather than clear classes. Chapter 7 looks at diachronic and regional variation. S. concludes that the burials resist a simple classification as 'Greek' or 'Balkan' and also notes that diachronic changes seem to explain variation more than regional differences do. The overall wealth of graves drops dramatically after the Archaic period, but variation in grave goods increases. S. claims that there is little support for the hypothesis that there was a flood of eastern goods into Macedonian graves as the Macedonian empire was built, but there is a shift from communal to more individualistic burials, a pattern well-noted in other places too. Here a look at, for example, D. Gorzelany's *Macedonia – Alexandria Monumental funerary complexes of the late Classical and Hellenistic age* (2019) might have provided a more insightful view of the form that cultural dialogue might take in the mortuary record of the late classical/early Hellenistic period.

The book is clearly structured, well written in an academic style, even though some casual phrasing is present here and there (p. 2, 'such as hope that it will be interesting to those new to it – and yes, even a bit fun'), and some book titles in the text do not appear in the bibliography. The volume is well researched, convincingly argued and adequately referenced. Obviously, it draws on long-standing research and a meticulous study of the material within a dissertation, a fact reflected in both its strengths and weaknesses.

The concentration on central-western Macedonia might seem narrow to readers interested in a broader regional analysis of Macedonian society and limits the book's appeal. While S. drops eastern Macedonia, since it 'included southern Greek colonies and had its own (although linked) trajectory' (p. 6), a compare/contrast approach to the more distant southern Greece, Athens in particular, is evident throughout (e.g. pp. 108, 134–5, 139, 186, 188 etc). This comparative approach helps readers appreciate the distinctiveness of Macedonian social structures while at the same time recognising patterns shared with other cultural groups. But while the work aims at situating Macedonian societal norms within the broader context of the ancient Greek world, it is not made clear where exactly it stands within current discussions of societal negotiations taking place in the mortuary record of the archaic through to Hellenistic times, or why the patterns identified in the region under study may or may not be distinct from the rest of the Greek mainland.

Yet, the book benefits from an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating insights from history, archaeology, anthropology, agency and gender studies. This methodology enriches the analysis and helps paint a relative picture of the social fabric of ancient Macedonia through the burial evidence. S.'s clear and engaging writing style makes complex concepts accessible to scholars, students and general readers. S.'s work is another valuable contribution to the field of mortuary archaeology of classical antiquity and a must-read for those interested in the social negotiations in burial contexts.

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