

THE AMPHIAREION AT OROPOS IN CONTEXT

WILDING (A.) *Reinventing the Amphiareion at Oropos. (Mnemosyne Supplements 445.)* Pp. xvi + 308, colour figs, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Cased, €120, US\$144. ISBN: 978-90-04-40499-1.

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In this book, stemming from her 2017 doctoral dissertation, W. provides a useful introduction to the shrine of Amphiaraos for students and non-specialists, especially those who might struggle with V.C. Petrakos's books published in modern Greek (*Ο Ψωπός και τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου* [1968] and *Οἱ ἐπιγραφές τοῦ Ψωποῦ* [1997]). The introduction heralds the commendable aim of providing a 'politically-focused analysis' (p. 3) of the use and reuse of inscriptions by various agents active in the shrine: W. endeavours to bridge the gap between religious studies, epigraphy and political history by highlighting 'the politicising role of the cult', through 'the concept of reinvention, the process of redefining one's existing relation to things, places and events' (p. 3). This is undoubtedly a sound ambition, and W. shows precise command of the shrine's layout, history and large epigraphic corpus. However, the monograph does not quite achieve this aim because of its generally imprecise use of concepts, frequent circular reasoning and serious bibliographical omissions.

The brief introduction (Chapter 1) puts emphasis on spatial dynamics and on the agency of the individuals and communities involved in publishing inscriptions at the shrine. Acknowledging the influence (among others) of S. Alcock (*Archaeologies of the Greek Past* [2002]) and especially J. Ma (*Statues and Cities* [2013]), W. insists on the idea that reuse 'functioned as a means of political display and social competition' (p. 9). Although she presents it as a conclusion of her work, it rather seems to be the premise of her research, which in a way weakens the contribution of her case studies in strengthening this point. It is also slightly surprising that a monograph dealing heavily with proxeny decrees and the role of the elite ignores P. Veyne's influential work *Le Pain et le Cirque* (1976) as well as M. Domingo Gyax's now classic work *Benefactions and Rewards in the Ancient Greek City* (2016). On the reuse of statue bases, one would also have expected G. Biard, *La Représentation honorifique dans les cités grecques* (2017).

The book is then divided into four chapters arranged both chronologically and thematically, according to the nature of the epigraphical evidence available for each period. Chapter 2, still rather introductory, deals with the geographical and archaeological situation of the shrine as well as its origins. One might regret that it falls short of providing a clear and precise outline of the (admittedly complicated) history of the shrine and its successive periods of subordination to its Athenian and Boeotian neighbours. This is left for readers to reconstruct (from e.g. pp. 28, 40, 50–1). Yet, concerning the foundation date of the shrine, W. does give a clear and nuanced discussion of the evidence and scholarship (pp. 37–46) and cautiously concludes that the issue cannot be resolved.

Chapter 3 focuses on the intermittent Athenian domination of the classical period and the dedications by elite Athenians as well as the Oropian decrees. This chapter best exemplifies the problematic status of this book, which is neither a synthesis of the history of the shrine nor a general study of reinvention, which would have been better served by a series of different case studies. As W. clearly points out, epigraphic reuse is difficult to comment on for the classical Amphiareion, as very few of those inscriptions, usually written on *stelae*, have been found *in situ*. This is conveniently summed up in Table 1

(pp. 53–6), which lists dedications and public inscriptions from the period 500–335 BCE, with descriptions of their findspots. Unfortunately, the map showing those *Fundorte* (fig. 7, p. 64), like most of the illustrations in the book, is rather poorly edited, and the names of inscriptions, printed in blue, are often hidden by the outline of structures. The concept of reinvention is less applicable for this period; consequently, this chapter, although useful for neophyte readers to follow the sequence of events, falls somewhat outside of the conceptual scope of the book.

Moving to ‘Agency and Aspirations’ (section 3.3, p. 67), W. examines, among other examples, the case of the fourth-century *stoa* that stood in front of the theatre. W. interprets the *stoa* as a sign of Boeotian influence (pp. 70–1), but this conclusion is based on an erroneous reading of J.J. Coulton’s publication of the monument (*ABSA* 63 [1968], 147–83). W. seems to base her conclusion on the following sentence by Coulton (pp. 180–1): ‘[T]hough Boeotia was in part racially connected with the Dorian Peloponnese, the flourishing art of her neighbour Athens must have had a considerable effect’ (quoted on p. 70). Yet, Coulton goes on in the same paragraph to specify that ‘The stylistic evidence, therefore, though by no means conclusive, suggests a Macedonian rather than a Theban origin for the *stoa*’.

W. links the role of individual members of the Athenian elite in asserting their *polis*’ domination on the Amphiareion with their ‘interest in the sphere of religion’ (p. 85). This vague conception of Greek religion, also applied to Sulla (pp. 210, 215), would have been greatly improved by C. Sourvinou-Inwood’s ‘*polis* religion’ model (‘What is Polis Religion?’, in: O. Murray and S. Price [edd.], *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* [1991], pp. 295–322, absent from the bibliography, which includes papers by Sourvinou-Inwood on other topics) and its critical reappraisal by J. Kindt (*Rethinking Greek Religion* [2012]). W. concludes: ‘when an external *polis* assumed control of Oropos and its sanctuary, it was in fact a narrow group of elite agents who played out their ambitions within the shrine and determined its administration’ (p. 120): such a statement can hardly be debated, and Veyne’s description of euergetism would have allowed W. to offer a more thorough analysis of the sociological, economic and political dynamics at work in this context.

Chapter 4 deals with the inclusion of Oropos and the Amphiareion in the Boeotian *koinon* in the early Hellenistic period and with the numerous proxeny decrees inscribed on earlier Hellenistic statue bases. This chapter is a revised version of a paper by W. (*BICS* 58 [2015], 55–81), although not properly referenced. W. presents interesting statistics on Oropian and Boeotian federal decrees and provides a useful synthesis of previous scholarship on the integration of Oropos in the Hellenistic Boeotian *koinon* (D. Knoepfler, E. Mackil, C. Müller). Her discussion of Oropos’ proxeny network, based on W. Mack, *Proxeny and Polis* (2015), reaches the expected conclusion that coastal cities were over-represented among Oropian *proxenoi*. W. goes on to show that among Boeotian *poleis*, those with access to the sea had significantly more *proxenoi* than their continental counterparts (pp. 153–4), but does not explain why Anthedon only has one preserved proxeny decree, and excludes from the analysis several *poleis* of Boeotia.

Chapter 5 studies the reuse of Hellenistic dedications in the first century BCE to honour Romans, especially Sulla. This is by far the best part of the book, and the one where the concept of reinvention proves useful. W. convincingly argues that the Oropians’ reuse of Hellenistic statues to honour Romans was not only a means of securing good relations with the new dominant power, but also contributed to redefining their own identity. W.’s careful study of the spatial dynamics allows her to show that far from awarding second-hand honours, the Oropians gave Romans some of their best-situated bases in the row of honorific statues to the north-east of the temple, at the western end of this row, closest

to the temple. Furthermore, by not erasing previous proxeny decrees and sculptors' signatures, they made their Roman benefactors part of their own past (pp. 230–8).

Despite its convincing analyses of specific epigraphic, literary and archaeological evidence, this book leaves the impression of a somewhat missed opportunity. Some mistakes and lack of clarity prevent W. from channelling her precise knowledge of the shrine's epigraphical record into a nuanced and bibliographically informed sociological and political analysis.

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ARGOS ANCIENT AND MODERN

HALL (J.M.) *Reclaiming the Past. Argos and its Archaeological Heritage in the Modern Era*. Pp. xvi + 245, ills, maps. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2021. Cased, US\$49.95. ISBN: 978-1-5017-6053-2.

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The main goal of this ambitious and innovative book is to present the city of Argos in the north-eastern Peloponnese from a new and original point of view: the reception of the local archaeological heritage through the centuries. In doing so, it fills a gap between ancient history and modern history in introducing them as two parts of the same story and enlightening the duality of history: history as we inherit it, history as we write it. The last decades have shown how important it is to come back to the works of our predecessors so as to understand the way in which we make history today.

The city of Argos has always been and still is a challenging case study: it is a modern city built on an ancient one, which never shared the fame of Athens and Sparta, nor the same modern scholars' interest. Moreover, since Roman times, it is a dethroned city in the representations, because of the constant comparison with Homeric Argos, due to the 'belief in a fundamental continuity' (p. 50). To deal with this complicated past and the stereotypes attached to it was the real challenge of this book. But as demanding as studying Argos can be, it appears as a perfect opportunity to reunite the local and the global scale, to see Greek history through the epichoric lens, to write a history that is not 'despatialized' and immortal, but comes from the field.

After having studied the ethnic identity of ancient Argolid (J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* [1997]), H. focuses here on the analysis of the 'process of the creation of historical memory and of memorialization of the past' (p. 18) in modern times. He shows how the past of the Argive city has been perceived and experienced by locals and travellers through the centuries and how it evolved from an obvious lack of interest from both groups during medieval times to the rediscovery of the ancient Greek past by travellers since the sixteenth century. It was then enhanced during the Greek Revolution, with a renewed consideration of the past in the local identity. Through this historical span H. is always replacing the question in a broader national and international context.

To touch as closely as possible the feelings of locals and travellers towards the Argive past, H. uses Foucault's concepts of 'heterotopia' ('demarcated spaces, set off from regular