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David B. Small. *Ancient Greece: Social Structure and Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 284pp., 46 b/w illustr., 5 maps, pbk, ISBN 9780521719261)

This is an ambitious book in both its geographical and chronological coverage, but also in its scope, as it tries to approach a well-trod archaeological terrain through fresh eyes. While its comprehensive chronological coverage does not limit itself to the typical classical period of ancient Greek history (sixth to third centuries BC) —a definite advantage in allowing the reader to approach and evaluate the long and arduous process of social and cultural development—its theoretical perspective does not do great justice to the explanation of this social change.

The book comprises twelve chapters organised in a roughly similar format that includes a section on the 'Measures of Social Complexity' at the end of each chapter followed by recommended further readings. After a theoretical overview of the book's general approach in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, 'The Ancient Greek Landscape' aims to elucidate the physical setting of the study, which is, however, described as the 'environment in which the Greeks lived' (p. 9). This unfortunately evokes an uncritically homogenized ethnicity as well as presents a view of a timeless Mediterranean geography, equally without reflection. Chapter 3 discusses the Neolithic, focusing on central and northern Greece, regions which do not feature much in subsequent discussions. Chapter 4 examines the developments during the third millennium BCE in the Cyclades, southern mainland Greece, and very briefly (barely two pages), Crete. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the development of palatial societies in Crete and the mainland, respectively; and Chapter 7 is devoted to the Iron Age, from the eleventh to the eighth centuries BCE, now encompassing a much wider geographical extent that reaches across the eastern and western Mediterranean. Thematic approaches to the classical period are presented in Chapter 8, followed by a rather compact treatment of the rise of Macedon, the subsequent Hellenistic periods, and elements of the Roman conquest in

Chapter 9, bringing us to the end of the chronological framework explored by the book. A rather peculiar inclusion at this point is the discussion of the development of archaic polis on Crete, in Chapter 10. While a case study of this sort is interesting, in that it demonstrates the diversity of social and political institutions during these very long periods of historical development, something that perhaps was not sufficiently demonstrated in preceding chapters, it is puzzling why the case study is included at this point of the book when the structure of the discussion has clearly been chronological. The last two chapters present a summary of the argument (Chapter 11) and a comparative case study from New World archaeology (Chapter 12).

It is inevitable that a book of such scope will have to be selective in both its methodology and its archaeological examples. Therefore, a specific theoretical perspective alongside a clear, matching methodology would be valuable to the articulation of a coherent overview of the social and cultural developments collected under the description 'Ancient Greece'. Sadly, the book falls short of achieving this, despite presenting a wealth of information. A key problem is that the theoretical direction taken up seems poorly justified. Evolutionary theory, and specifically complexity theory, is put forward as the analytic framework; however, it is hard to see what this entails in practice, what are the particular theoretical premises employed, and how they can offer new insights into an archaeological context that has long been the focus of diverse intellectual attention. Moreover, the use of a tripartite scheme of 'identified structure', 'chaotic rapid transition', and 'new social structure' (p. 3) as a standard method of exploring each of the different sub-periods is too generic to be able to support meaningful interpretations; indeed, these do not translate well to the actual discussion of archaeological examples. For instance, the proliferation of elaborate burials on Crete at the transition from the Early to the Middle Bronze Age is described as representing a period of chaos due to the fragmentation of earlier social structures (p. 49). This, however, is neither justified by any analysis presented in the book, nor supported by the broader scholarship of the period and the regional context (e.g. Schoep et al., 2012). In a similar vein, in the discussion of the Iron Age (Ch. 7), the author states, 'complexity theory allows us to highlight changes in social structure before and after phase transitions' (p. 107); but the subsequent discussion simply summarises the main developments of the period on the basis of two very limited case studies of dubious representativeness.

The 'measures of social complexity' section at the end of each chapter is rather misleading. The main criterion for greater complexity regularly appears to be simply a greater amount of material evidence. For example, there is no clear explanation as to what makes the funerary record of the Early Bronze Age (EBA) in the mainland more complex than that of the Neolithic, other than that the EBA mortuary remains are more visible. Alternatively, this may denote a different emphasis on the rituals surrounding death. Thus, we must ask: does this signify more complex social institutions or simply different concerns that may derive from diverse social conditions? Among other criteria of social complexity put forward in subsequent chapters is craft specialization, the specific meaning and operational dimensions of which are never explained or analysed. Does the evidence reveal division of labour? Do the craft goods betray greater technical expertise? How is this measured and compared between different periods?

Moving across the chapters (and forwards in time), social complexity is always

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presented as greater than earlier periods on the basis that we encounter more complex institutions. Nowhere, however, is there an acknowledgement that, in later periods, we inevitably also have a greater amount and variety of archaeological and historical sources that offer the opportunity to approach particular historical contexts from a diverse range of perspectives. More integrated comparisons would have helped to drive these suggestions home. For example, what makes the political economy of the archaic polis more complex than that of a Mycenaean palace? In terms of the scale of operations involving a multitude of agents, locations, and economic aims, they are broadly (if not closely) comparable; therefore, it is necessary to pinpoint more securely the reason why the later institutions are considered more complex.

Other features of the theoretical framework of the book appear rather idiosyncratic in that they are either not consistently employed as a common thread of the discussion, or their relevance is not adequately justified when they are discussed. Feasting is one such feature that is isolated as a recurrent focus of social action in each different period examined. While the significance of commensality on a grand or diacritical scale has long been established as a key component of social action, be it ancient or contemporary, and there is a large literature on gastropolitics, the book does not sufficiently explain why only this aspect of social life is selected as the thread that links all the different sociocultural settings that make up 'ancient Greece'. In addition, in the chapters dealing with the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, feasting is presented as only one element of social negotiation, often overlooked in favour of religious practice, warfare and administrative apparatus.

The concept of social structure employed in the book is identified as being close to Giddens' structuration theory, a model that views culture as 'made up of units of shared repeated behaviours and associated meanings that direct the action of individuals' (p. 1). The author goes on to explain that, for an archaeologist, such units are equated with 'the remains of identifiable contexts of interaction, spaces marked by specific features and landscape where actors negotiated for identity and social position' (p. 2), and that the book deals specifically with 'the spatial units visible in the archaeological record' (p.2). Framed in this manner, the distinctiveness of such units seems to derive entirely from their spatial differentiation, while what is not 'visible' in the archaeological record is also part of the past we seek to understand, so promoting an analytic frame that relies on visible units misses out on important aspects of past behaviour.

A more problematic premise concerns the comparative approach put forward. The author states that 'the distribution of these spatial units through time and space allows me to identify the various cultures that occupied the territories which the Greeks inhabited through time' (p. 2). This embodies two contradictory perspectives: on the one hand, it perceives cultures as abstract constructs that nevertheless physically occupy space; while, on the other hand, it relies on material culture as a descriptor of ethnic identity, the distribution of which is then used to identify different cultures. Crucial to this is the perception of 'the Greeks', a unified ethnic label that is consistently employed to analyse socio-political developments taking place over more than three millennia. It becomes obvious (but remains implicit and untheorized) that the definition of this ethnic identity relies entirely on the cultural developments of the classical period which are then projected backwards to explain teleologically the cultural and social conditions that created 'Greekness'.

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Language is implicitly taken as the only/primary indicator of Greek ethnicity; but, although a criterion of debatable reliability (at least when used on its own), this feature is not consistently employed through the different historical episodes discussed. If being Greek relied solely on language, this should probably exclude half of the contents of the book for which there is no evidence of Greek language (e.g. the Neolithic and most of the Bronze Age), while claims of 'Greeks in the Bronze Age' (p. 10) and 'Greek-speaking people migrating from Anatolia to Greece around 2000 BCE' (p. 76) would need to be subjected to greater critical scrutiny. By contrast, the discussion of the Macedonian context is presented as *other* and opposite to Greek identity (despite evidence for shared Greek language), whereas the ensuing Hellenistic empire is analysed as inherently Greek. While such contrasting interpretations embody historical tensions that are evident in the archaeological evidence, it is necessary to highlight and explicitly analyse them as such, and theorize and problematize such ethnic constructions as well as how they generate ethnic identities.

Some minor issues also undermine the overall value of the project. Although the book is directed at the uninitiated, there are many casual references to archaeological sites and studies that only connoisseurs of Aegean and Greek archaeology will be able to recognize. Some inaccuracies can confuse a newcomer to the topic; for example, Chapter 7 explains that new cup shapes, which are now two-handled and passed from one person to the next, denote a change in drinking practices. However, the list of new drinking shapes also includes *oinochoe*, which are one-handled and a serving shape. In addition, the general recommendations for further reading are rather eclectic and not always up to date. For example, the section on Greek colonization refers to a 1998 publication as 'recent' (p. 128); and the discussion of Homeric epics as a source of information for the Iron Age Greek communities does not include more recent collections (e.g. Morris & Laffineur, 2007; Sherratt & Bennett, 2017).

The series in which the book is published was created as an introduction to different archaeological regions and cultures for students. As such, the book broadly fulfils these aims, though the theoretical perspective that is adopted appears more likely to confuse students than to enable them to grasp the complexity of social and cultural developments of 'Ancient Greece'. While the aim of providing an overarching grand narrative to explain the historical and cultural development of a specific region has its merits—i.e. it may expose common threads in the diverse communities and social groups that have inhabited this area over millennia—this book suffers from a lack of consistency in its research programme. Although it is at pains to emphasise that 'the Greeks' and 'ancient Greece' are not to be limited to the confines of modern political divisions, it also fails to provide a consistent set of criteria according to which different regions, cultural, and social practices are defined as 'Greek' in this long historical trajectory. Implicitly, the definition of Greece that is espoused in the book is rooted in the classical tradition and projected either backwards or forwards in time, simply reiterating conventional perceptions of the 'Greek world'. In light of recent debates about the role of classics in contemporary education and society, it might have been more useful to direct the theoretical effort of this project towards evaluating and appraising the relevance, usefulness, and contribution of an archaeology of ancient Greece to our understandings of this region and its legacy.

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Elena Isayev. *Migration, Mobility and Place in Ancient Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 502pp, 4 appendices, 25 b/w illustr., 9 colour plates, 11 maps, hbk, ISBN 9781107130616)

During a period in which we are seeing a global resurgence of the ugliest forms of nationalism, the mapping of attitudes to migrant groups and individuals in ancient Italy is enlightening. Isayev's core argument is that human mobility in the past was much greater in Italy than the statistics provided by the ancient sources on total numbers of participants in colonization and state-sponsored incentives suggest. She sets herself the task to explore the nature of and attitudes towards human mobility in Italy during the last millennium BC.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I includes the introduction with an overview of the book and the conceptualization of mobility in the past and present, together with the discussion of the nature of the demographic data available for the last two centuries BC. Part II outlines mobility in earlier centuries for which written sources are lacking by presenting mytho-historical narratives and archaeological material in order to investigate culture-contact, settlement patterns, and colonization. Part III examines the extent to which mobility was anticipated and expected. The author expected a higher level of private, individual movement in antiquity. Part IV concentrates on the concept of place and the way Rome became the capital and the centre of connectivity after the Social War (91-87 BC) when citizenship was granted to all living south of the river Po. The first section is the shortest and the three following parts give attention to the subject matter in equal measure.

This book reminds me of Robert Garland's (2014) *Wandering Greeks*. Garland also debated migration, asylum, and population displacement; and, after the discussion of these big, contemporary issues, both volumes use various literary sources to cover both factual and fictional writings on the subject matter. However, as an Etruscologist, Isayev brings the archaeological material into the mix and gives space also to theoretical considerations. At 500 pages, the current volume is a much meatier affair than Garland's book.