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Manolis E. Pagkalos / Andrea Scarpato (eds.): **New Perspectives on the Hellenistic Peloponnese**

The geographical and temporal expression 'Hellenistic Peloponnese' has recently become standard usage among scholars of Mainland Greece in the Hellenistic Period. While its boundaries remain contingent on individual scholarly projects, a few developments have consistently belonged to the period: the rise and consolidation of the Achaean League, the Spartan civic reforms and their renewed expansionism, Antigonid and Roman presence and intrusion, and the proliferation of competing local leaders and identities. The book under review, edited by Manolis Pagkalos and Andrea Scarpato, gathers nine papers along with an introduction and conclusion, with the goal of refining our understanding of the period through closer engagement with texts, epigraphy, numismatics, and archaeology.

After a preface by the editors, the book opens with a theoretical and methodological introduction by Daniel Stewart, which wrestles with the central issue of periodization: what do we mean by the label 'Hellenistic Peloponnese'? What are the implications? And to whose hermeneutic benefit? One of the starting points of the piece is that the current periodization "serves a modern, not an ancient, purpose" (2), particularly considering that the period, place, and sources for its study are "invented" (5). With this concept, the author seeks to highlight the process through which historians and archaeologists encounter their evidence and interpret it, imposing "coherence on incoherent material" (12). Embracing this process is what allows scholars to say new things, and this, Stewart writes, is what has shaped the chapters of the book.

So, what does the Hellenistic Peloponnese look like in this book?

First and foremost, Sparta and Laconia shine front and center, particularly considering that five papers deal with one or another aspect of the city and the region. The first three papers comprise Part I of the book, titled "Sparta's Internal and External Relations". Andrea Scarpato deftly identifies Kleonymus' intense military and diplomatic activity outside of Sparta during Areus I's and Archidamus IV's kingship as a sign that the traditional institution of the Spartan diarchy may have been undergoing a process of transformation already in the early third century. Next, Roumpini-Ioanna Charami looks carefully at the archaeological evidence related to the perioikic communities to suggest that these settlements may have become independent poleis before the formation of the koinon of the Lacedaemonians. Finally, Charlotte van Regenmortel argues that the activities of Agesilaus in Egypt, Akrotatus in Sicily, and Kleonymus in Southern Italy show how Sparta, in spite of evident limitations, continued to seek a presence in the world of big affairs of the developing Hellenistic period. Part II, titled "Structures and Narratives of Power", opens with the fourth paper on Sparta. Krzysztof Zimny studies how the emergence of regional competing powers, above all the Achaean League, considerably reduced Sparta's territory of operation and, concurrently, reshaped their external policies: Spartans went from hegemony-seeking plans to a defensive-oriented strategy that mostly sought to contain and punctuate Achaean expansionism. Finally, the fifth chapter on Sparta comes from Part III, titled "Archaeology and Local Perspectives". In it, James Lloyd focuses on the lead votive figurines from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. The author uses the figurines as a proxy to reconstruct changes over time in votive practices, indicating a transformation in the late Classical and early Hellenistic period from mass participation to displays that privilege individual excellence, which pairs well with some of the ideas put forward in the previous papers.

A second important theme of the book is the emergence of regional polities. The Hellenistic Peloponnese is the world in which the Achaean League becomes a central driver of political change and takes over as one of the main exercisers of violence. Two chapters, both in Part II,

address this theme. First, Richard Evans examines the events around Mantinea, which he labels "the Mantineian genocide," to reveal the ruthlessness with which the Achaean elites imposed their hegemony and sought to unify the Peloponnese under the *koinon*'s structures. He also demonstrates how Polybius went to great lengths to cleanse the damaging memory of the events for the narrative justifying the League's policies. Second, Manolis Pagkalos investigates the narrative broadcast by the *koinon* to sustain its unifying image not only as an Achaean power but as a Peloponnesian force. He argues that Polybius' writing played a central role in teleologically manipulating the memory of the historical evolution of the Achaean League in order to legitimize the constant expansion and ultimate ascendancy of the League in his time.

A third important theme is raised in the last chapter of Part II. Charalambos Chrysafis offers a productive overview of the nature of the Antigonid presence in the region throughout the third century, focusing on the pro-Antigonid actors across Peloponnesian cities, and thus linking the role played by internal agents and foreign powers. The paper provides a helpful periodization of the Antigonid presence in southern Greece and makes a compelling case about how local factors motivated the alignment of some Peloponnesian leaders with the Antigonids, thereby nuancing the view that the latter implanted allied tyrants and military garrisons in a deliberately planned way.

The fourth theme present in the book is local perspectives, through which the authors seek to trace local agency and particular expressions of identity. In addition to James Lloyd's paper mentioned above on the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, which from a local perspective equally speaks to the general theme of the vicissitudes of Hellenistic Sparta, the three other papers that comprise Part III deepen our appreciation of the local in different parts of the region. David Weidgenannt focuses on the sanctuary of Epidauros and highlights the importance of the so-called *gens magna*, a prominent local family, in the history of the sanctuary, which extended into the Roman imperial period. Tamara Dijkstra delves into the funerary evidence from Patras, through which we see how more diverse, individual, and family-oriented values moved to the forefront at the expense of formerly homogenizing practices. It is a trend seen across the northeastern Peloponnese. People began to invest heavily in funerary expenses, most probably as the natural outcome of increased wealth thanks to the new connections with the western Mediterranean. Finally, Stelios Damigos looks at the production of civic coinages in the early Hellenistic Peloponnese, tracing how local production responded to the main trends of the Hellenistic world, including the need to respond to the ebbs and flows proper to the constant meddling of larger powers.

The book closes with a short piece by Graham Shipley, in which he reflects on the social investment required to keep civic, regional, and cultural identities alive and meaningful. The ability to study them and the value of our readings, he writes, will ultimately depend on the "rules of engagement" (200) designed to produce sophisticated interpretations of the evidence.

Beyond the rich thematic coverage, which does justice to the polyphonic nature of the region in the Hellenistic period, the articles in the book present attentive and sophisticated readings of both well-known and new evidence, which significantly enrich our understanding of the region. I found particularly rewarding the productive readings of Polybius across multiple papers, as well as the introduction of new archaeological evidence within larger historical narratives, as one can see, for instance, in the case of Patras.

What did the Peloponnese look like during the Hellenistic period? Pick up this book and you will get a very good idea, from international engagements to regional developments, from civic change to local expressions of identity, and from economic and intellectual resourceful responses to some particularly grim human experiences.