though Scharff's discussion is circumscribed by limited attention to recent scholarship on ethnicity and identity in the Greek world.

I conclude this review with an important collection of essays on private correspondence in the ancient Mediterranean, edited by Madalina Dana.[20] The study of Greek letters has received great attention over the last ten years, with two major works by Paola Ceccarelli and Madalina Dana, among others.[21] The importance of this collection lies first in its temporal and spatial extent: apart from chapters on classical Greece, it includes chapters on ancient Mesopotamia, Iberia, Asia Minor, Egypt and even Russia, while chronologically ranging from the second millennium BCE to the end of the first millennium CE. This expanded temporal and spatial coverage will be of great value to Greek historians; the volume is also important for bringing to the attention of the non-specialist audience recent fascinating corpora, such as that of the ostraca letters from late-antique Ephesus. The eighteen chapters are divided into four main parts. The first examines the conceptual terminology we apply to the definition and study of ancient letters; the second examines the materiality of ancient letters (with a very interesting comparison between letters and curse tablets); the third explores the formal aspects of ancient letters, and will be of great value to non-specialists who tend to misinterpret letters because they ignore these formal aspects; and, finally, the fourth contains case studies of how letters can be used to study social, economic, and cultural history (with very fascinating contributions on letters as a source of economic history and letters as a gendered practice).

KOSTAS VLASSOPOULOS

University of Crete, Greece
vlasop@uoc.gr
doi:10.1017/S001738352400024X

Art and archaeology

The first two books of this review are part of the Bloomsbury 'Cultural History' series, which has now been around for several years. In this series, a cultural theme is explored over the course of a six-volume set that moves progressively through time from antiquity to the modern age. Each volume works as a stand-alone book exploring that particular era but, to facilitate cross-referencing, each volume is organized in the same way, with a standard sequence of chapters. It is a clever idea, but the two books here, on the theme of furniture and colour, show some of the problems of having to squeeze antiquity into categories designed for the study of later periods.

Those issues surface in the volume on furniture, edited by Dimitra Andrianou, who is faced with the difficulty of fitting ancient furniture and its users' attitudes into

[20] *La correspondance privée dans la Méditerranée antique: sociétés en miroir*. Edited by Madalina Dana. Scripta antiqua series, vol. 168. Bordeaux, Ausonius éditions, 2023. Pp. 348. Paperback €25.00, ISBN: 978-2-35613-563-6.

[21] P. Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing: A Cultural History (600 BC–150 BC)*, Oxford, 2013; M. Dana, *La correspondance grecque privée sur plomb et sur tesson: corpus épigraphique et commentaire historique*, Munich, 2021.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

categories that really do not work well for antiquity.[1] The sequence moves through chapters looking at actual furniture, in terms of its construction and different deployments, before ending with two chapters on 'visual' and 'verbal' representations. The problem is that, by that point in the book, the reader is already thoroughly familiar with these kinds of representations. Apart from places where particular environmental conditions, such as the dry heat of Egypt, or natural disaster, as on Santorini or in the Bay of Naples, have allowed organic materials to survive 2,000 years, most ancient furniture has long rotted away. As a result, a good deal of our knowledge relies on literary and epigraphic sources and visual depictions that have already been mined for information in the preceding chapters. Nor can the chapters fit the attitudes of antiquity. The early chapters proceed through different contexts for furniture (e.g. domestic settings) before reaching Chapter 6's designated topic, 'Exhibition and Display'. In a world in which people lived without our sense of privacy, where even the most intimate pieces of domestic furniture, such as the marriage bed, might be on view to visitors, the chapter is largely redundant.

The consequence of these ill-fitting chapter titles is that there is a lot of repetition: some examples, such as the eighth-century-BCE wooden furniture from Gordion or the garden party relief from Nineveh, come round again and again. This need not necessarily be a negative: with so much new material, repetition can provide useful consolidation. The problem here is that the same source might be described in several chapters without ever advancing the analysis of it. Repetition also becomes a problem perhaps because, unusually in an edited volume, so many of the chapters are written by the same authors. In several places, whole sentences reappear from previous chapters.

That is not to say that there is a shortage of great material here. The chapter 'Makers, Making, and Materials' by Vassilis Patrakis and Maria Leontinou, is particularly engaging, shedding light on the lives and skills of the craftsmen, and their sourcing and working of the raw materials. Of that furniture, the most iconic has got to be the *klismos* chair, whose influence we saw in the last review, as Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis demonstrated how Thomas Hope's *Designs of Modern Costumes* (1812) inserted contemporary women into Greek vase scenes, wearing chic Greek fashion, and sitting on their *klismoi*.[2] It seems astonishing that we still do not understand how the real classical *klismos* was made (42).

There are some great examples here, too. As a generation Xer, I particularly enjoyed Tutankhamen's Z bed. Ownership of folding beds 'for guests' was a great source of pride for my aunties as they aspired to the lower middle class – they would have been utterly delighted, and definitely not surprised, that pharaohs had such items! It is hard also not to love the gilded commode carried for Byzantine emperors while on campaign.

These two examples show another aspect of this book: its wide chronological and geographical range covering pharaonic Egypt, the near East, and late antiquity besides

[1] *A Cultural History of Furniture in Antiquity*. Edited by Dimitra Andrianou. London; New York; New Delhi; Sydney, Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. xv + 277. 40 colour + 41 b/w illustrations. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-4725-7776-4.

[2] Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis. 2023. 'The Graphic Medium and Artistic Style: Thomas Hope (1769–1831) and Two-dimensional Encounters with Greek Vases', in C. Meyer and A. Petsalis-Diomidis (eds.) *Drawing the Greek Vase*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 84–111.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Greece and Rome. There is great advantage to this coverage. It allows us to see how common ideas and objects circulated the Mediterranean. For example, by the end of the volume, the reader has not only learned how the concept of the reclining couch travelled from the Near East but also how real couches traversed the Mediterranean, their remains found in the Antikythera shipwrecks (105). It also allows us to see some commonalities in the early experiences of furniture, with adaptability and mobility being key themes throughout the volume (with the exception of funerary furniture, such as the couches and thrones in Etruscan tombs).

However, there are also drawbacks. There are some elisions: at one point we are told that furniture craftsmen received 'payment in the form of food rations' (45), a statement that makes no sense for antiquity broadly. At other times, coverage is uneven: the average Roman homeowner, more competitive than my aunts, would be appalled to find that the chapter 'Exhibition and Display' covers Roman display in around four lines, being otherwise focused on the Greek East. Elsewhere, there are moments when the scope gets too ambitious, leading to incongruous information about, for example, the furniture of Urartu (146).

This volume comes to a very abrupt end. The final chapter finishes without a conclusion to its own content let alone that of the whole book. That seems rather symptomatic of the whole volume, which is full of great examples and covers a huge variety of sources and cultures but, because of the constrictions imposed by the series, is never able fully to develop a coherency on its own terms.

The volume on colour has a slightly easier time, partly because the chapter titles chosen for the series are more sympathetic to antiquity.[3] It is a wide-ranging volume, which considers philosophy and psychological perception as well as the practical and metaphorical uses of colour. From the beginning, the book sets up well the ways in which Greeks and Romans encountered, understood, and classified colour, with an emphasis on brightness as well as hue. The vast differences between an ancient and modern audience's perception is emphasized by Katherine McDonald's analysis of the extent to which Greek and Latin colour words fail to conform to 'basic colour terms', a theory developed in the late 1960s to demonstrate a universal categorization of colour across languages.

This volume also gains focus by restricting itself to Greece and Rome, rarely treading outside canonical time boundaries (sometimes a shame because colour is clearly so important in early Christian art and liturgy). Even so, the 'Literature and the Performing Arts' chapter shows some of the difficulties in attempting to meet the brief across the whole of Greek and Roman culture. As Karen Bassi and David Wharton acknowledge, a survey would be 'an impossible task' and so they choose to select epic and drama, starting with the actual colours of the theatre (stage and costume) and then moving onto colour as metaphor and simile in the texts.

As with the previous volume, there is quite a lot of repetition, particularly regarding the role of murex purple in Roman culture, though on the whole those repetitions seem a bit more knowing here and are usually cross-referenced. Here, too, the chapters are a

[3] *A Cultural History of Colour in Antiquity*. Edited by David Wharton. London, New York, New Delhi, Sydney, Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. Pp. xiv + 256. 32 colour + 32 b/w illustrations. Paperback £25.99, ISBN: 978-1-350-45979-3.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

little uneven in tone: some, like Verity Platt's chapter, 'Religion and Ritual', are delivered more like a paper on a theme and others as an introductory survey of the topic. Ellen Swift finds an elegant way forward in this regard. Her chapter, 'Artifacts', usefully includes a discussion that furnishes the reader with principles they can easily take away to apply to their own examples.

As in the furniture volume, space is given to consider the craftspeople who made and applied colours and the materials and techniques with which they worked. Hilary Becker has the role of presenting this topic and does so in compelling fashion. I loved details such as the lead tags on clothes taken to the dyers (41) and the bladder masks worn by the workers who had to work with cinnabar, a pigment so important its production was organized by the Roman state (37).

One of the frustrations of the format is that it does not allow for a full contextualization of the history of attitudes towards colour in antiquity, and the book repeatedly falls back into creating a dichotomy between a neoclassical insistence on a 'white antiquity' and a very recent new appreciation of its colour. Of course, it is certainly true that scientific advances have allowed the reclamation of colour and, importantly, pattern that were hitherto lost for us: the zigzag patterns on the archer from the west pediment of the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina is such a compelling example with which to open the book (4–5). However, technological developments in the early nineteenth century also brought a celebration and awareness of ancient colour. Chromolithography revolutionized the printing world and allowed for the beautiful colour plates of books such as François Mazois's *Les Ruines de Pompéi*.[4] Interiors throughout Europe imitated the vibrant arrangements of Pompeian wall painting. Gottfried Semper's revolutionary work on the painting of architecture and sculpture does not get a mention until Stephan Zink's chapter, 'Architecture and Interiors' (154).[5] That is not to claim that these works ever overturned popular perceptions of white marble, free-standing sculpture, but just to remind us that the narrative of our journey towards accepting a coloured-in antiquity is more complex than we often acknowledge and our discomfort with it might have as much to do with early-twentieth-century aesthetics as those of the eighteenth.

Architecture in Ancient Central Italy is another edited volume, this time generated from a conference and so set with a much clearer objective relative to its content.[6] Useful maps and an illustration labelling the key parts of an Etruscan roof make the arguments more accessible to a wider audience. The chapters in this volume explore the architecture of Etruria and Latium from the Iron Age to consider how changing internal environments and outside influences shaped a rapidly changing technology. The architecture of this period is demonstrated to be the product of an increasingly connected world, allowing the mobility of ideas and craftspeople across vast distances, with the funerary architecture of Etruria featuring forms from as far as Syria. These

[4] François Mazois. 1813–1838. *Les Ruines de Pompéi*, 4 vols (vols 2–4 with M. Gau). Paris, F. Didot.

[5] Gottfried Semper. 1834. *Vorläufige Bemerkungen über die vielfarbige Architektur und Plastik bei den Alten*. Altona, Johann Friedrich Hammerich.

[6] *Architecture in Central Italy. Connections in Etruscan and Early Roman Building*. Edited by Charlotte R. Potts. Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 224. 42 colour illustrations, 5 maps. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-1-108-84528-1, paperback £27.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-93138-0.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ideas flowed independently of political alliances and military conquest: even antagonistic states used the same craftspeople and drew on the same innovations (109). As Nancy Winter demonstrates, they are also multi-directional. Whilst tile-roof systems emanate in the first instance from Greece to Italy, certain features that subsequently developed in Italy found their way back eastwards. The roofs that Winter documents are such important evidence because many buildings in Italy were made principally of mud brick and wood. As a result, the terracotta survivals are often all we have from which to imagine the rest of a building. However, given that tiles are part of one integrated roof system, many of which were repeated over and again in different buildings and locations, not too many tiles need to survive in order to understand the roof and from there the building beneath it. On the basis of knowledge largely gleaned from surviving tiles, Patricia S. Lulof and Loes Opfenhagen use VR to demonstrate a distinctive sequence of buildings at Satricum.

The chapters show the complexities of the interactions as foreign styles and technology have to meet local expectations and raw materials. They are manifestations of what John Hopkins, in his chapter, terms 'entanglement' (110). Knowledge has to be shared rather than imposed to create buildings that will work in any specific location. In the first chapter, Jean MacIntosh Turfa shows how local craftsmen met the challenge of creating wooden rafters strong enough to bear the heavy load of newfangled terracotta tiles. They rose to this challenge precisely because of the skills built up over multiple generations of constructing wooden edifices that could protect homes and villages from significant flooding (Bronze-Age Italy sounds a terrible time and place to live!) The technology developed from necessity was ready to scale up to create the trusses that would hold these splendid new roofs. They also became a statement in themselves: as important a feature to which to draw attention (perhaps by gilding, for example) as the tiles they supported.

Approaching architectural developments in this way also leads to a rethinking of the categories by which we study them. John Hopkins uses his chapter to counter the belief of a gap in building activity in Rome, whose beginning roughly coincided with the end of the monarchy and which is often situated as a break between Etruscan precedent and the creation of a properly 'Roman' architecture. The tile finds, together with evidence of buildings we know were built at the time (not least the city walls), not only show that Rome was not in crisis, could still muster a sizeable workforce, and access raw materials from beyond the city, but that there is a continuity of formal links with architecture in other parts of Italy: one antefix in the form of a female head from the Esquiline, for example, closely resembles examples found at Caere. In the end, the evidence suggests a continuation and interaction that our own insistence on periodizing history militates against noticing.

Alyson Roy, in tracing the roots of Roman conquest, confronts similar theoretical issues despite moving us forward several centuries to the wars being fought from the third century to the end of the first century BCE that led to Roman expansion into Gaul, Iberia, and the Greek peninsula.[7] As with Hopkins, one of the points of doing

[7] *Empire of Images. Visualizing the Conquered in the Roman Republic*. By Alyson Roy. Berlin, Boston, De Gruyter, 2024. Pp. xvii + 166. 48 illustrations., of which 10 in colour. Hardback £88, ISBN: 978-3-11-132534-7 (not currently available).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

so is to suggest that our tendency to locate the triumphal dissemination of conquest imagery as a phenomenon of the early principate encourages us not to look for its long antecedents. The conquest imagery of Augustus's principate was so successful and palatable precisely because it was already so familiar across Italy and the new provinces. There is also a secondary argument about the nature of Rome's relationship with Greek culture; that perhaps it should not be privileged as unique but seen in similar terms to what was happening elsewhere in the expanding empire at the same time.

Like Hopkins, too, Roy chooses 'entanglement' as the key term with which to define cultural interactions, as images move between conquered areas and Rome in both directions and are differently understood in these territories. The different modes of that interaction are described as overwriting (the Romans imposing themselves onto conquered spaces) and co-writing (the use of images that could mean different things to different audiences). The entanglements traced here are so complicated because they are often more complex than simply an exchange between one territory and another. The Gauls were not only the enemies of Rome, they had also been the enemy of the Hellenistic kingdoms in Asia Minor. By the time Rome came to need images to give visual expression to their own Gallic experiences, Pergamum had already produced two of the most iconic images of the Gaul that the Romans would ever know (and which, of course, are only now known through copies found in Rome). Gauls would become the conquered *par excellence*: coming to stand for barbarism in general throughout the Roman period.

Chapter 1 explores the exchange of imagery during the conquests of Gaul. Though there are some other great examples, such as the terracotta frieze from Civitalba of the Gauls being chased out of a temple they are raiding (18), the argument is mostly made around the imagery on coins, which privilege three types: weaponry and accessories (the Gallic shield and the trumpet); captives (the Gallic body and costume); trophies, and often the combination of all three. Both the conquered and the conquerors used these coins, and the Gauls would also have to view themselves in the guise of captives on the monuments built to commemorate Roman victory in their territory and, increasingly, on 'locally' commissioned monuments that start using the same imagery. What were the motivations of 'locals' to adopt this imagery? How did they view them? Did they see themselves or others in the defeated? Roy pays particular attention to images, well in the minority, that break these stereotypes. A coin that shows a Gaul in his chariot as an active warrior escapes the association with defeat. Was that because it was designed to speak to a local population? Maybe, but perhaps it also might be seen as the result of being minted at a time when the 'rules' of showing the conquered were not as set as they might become. A Gallic denarius copies a Roman one which showed Roma on the obverse and a cavalryman holding a severed head on the reverse. This does seem to be a convincing example of an image being selected from the Roman repertoire because it would strike a chord with many Gallic viewers, appealing as it did to local traditions of taking and displaying enemy heads.

Chapter 2 moves to Iberia, images of which made rather less impact on Roman iconography. The emphasis is therefore less on the adoption of Iberian images in Rome than on the manipulation of images by successive Roman generals trying to harness local resentments to raise Iberian support for their own aspirations to power. Many of the images do not speak directly of conquest but use images that could potentially be recognized by Romans and Iberians as 'their own' images. A key example

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

is the Iberian wolf, often on these coins specifically rendered female. Did that make her palatable to Romans as the she-wolf, even if she was minus the twins (75)? In this respect the chapter is very different from the first. In these coins, the images are not so obviously images OF conquest so much as images deployed in the process of conquest. Even when familiar tropes such as weaponry are shown, in this case Iberian labyrinth shields, they are shown by themselves and not in conjunction with trophies or captives.

The chapter on Asia Minor opens with two of the most triumphalist acts of overwriting: Aemilius Paullus's appropriation of the monument at Delphi meant for his beaten opponent, Perseus of Macedon, and Sulla's addition of trophies flanking the owl on Athenian tetradrachms. After that, as in the previous chapter, the discussion focuses more on the role of coin imagery in the negotiation (a much-used term in this volume) of civic identities post-conquest. The chapter ends with the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, slightly beyond the professed temporal reach of the discussion but allowing a return to explicit images of violent conquest.

The last chapter focuses on such images as they circulate in minor media, a crucial step in embedding them in imperial culture. The proposed sequence of dissemination seemed unnecessary. There does not seem to be any reason that such imagery needs to make the jump from public to domestic decoration before it appears on portable objects. As a result, a detour into the spread of Roman house-types seems largely unnecessary and the chapter picks up when it focuses on images of conquest in a variety of media. The last example is a lamp with a Gallic cavalryman at full gallop rather than captive: a missed opportunity, perhaps, to return to the theme of ambiguity as a mode of imagery that cemented its appeal for different audiences.

The period of imperial expansion in which Roy traces the development of imagery also offered new economic opportunities. Tracing history though the biography of objects has become a popular approach in recent years, and Caroline Cheung uses the *dolia*, the huge (sometimes as much as two metres high) ceramic jars that characterize the wine industry from the second century BCE to the third century CE.[8] The book traces its involvement through the entire process of making and selling wine, from its role as the vessel in which wine is fermented, to its use in transportation and storage, and then its presence in the bars in which the wine consumed. In doing so, Cheung must also imagine the lives of the people who interacted with them: the enslaved potters who developed their skills and eventually were manumitted to own their own slave teams; the landowners who invested in their production to create their own supply; the farmhands who wriggled inside them to clean the pitch lining every year; the tradesmen who bought and sold wine in huge quantities in the capital; and the enterprising small business men who bought up cracked *dolia* and put them to use in neighbourhood bars. Patched *dolia* have second lives storing dry goods or serving as receptacles on construction sites. They might even be sawn up so that parts could be used even when the whole had failed: the bottom part of a *dolium* at the Villa Regina at Boscoreale was used as water bowl, perhaps for the farm's chickens.

The book traces the use of *dolia* in three settings: Cosa, Pompeii, and Rome/Ostia, tracing the growing sophistication of the market. The Cosan examples are the earliest,

[8] *Dolia. The Containers that Made Rome an Empire of Wine*. By Caroline Cheung. Princeton, Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2024. Pp. 344. 75 b/w + 31 colour illustrations. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-0-691-24300-9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

made as a response to the expanding land-ownership and economic opportunities of the second century BCE. Their dimensions reflect a huge scaling-up of production, made clear in the following century by their presence in the villas around the Bay of Naples. The Villa Regina had eighteen dolia whilst its wealthier neighbour, the Villa della Pisanella, had eighty-four. Increase in production also entailed increase in transportation. The demand for wine around the Mediterranean resulted in the invention of the specialist ship: tankers with *dolia* cemented in their hulls. At first, ships took Italian wine to the provinces, but increasingly the traffic became two-way with wine produced in Gaul and Iberia being imported into Italy. As the economic gains became clear, farmers in those areas started using *dolia* to up their game in imitation of the Italian *cellae*, though in Gaul *dolia* did not have to be dug into the ground to keep cool. In Iberia, estates with several hundred, gigantic *dolia* reflect the production of a staggering amount of wine. They also show how the *dolia* not only reflected but helped create the increasingly unequal access to production: huge estates exploited the possibilities of vessels that a small farmer would struggle to afford or to absorb the risk of it bursting during fermentation, ruining the vat as well as all the product in it.

At Rome and Ostia, a new figure comes in, the warehouse-owners who could buy and store huge reserves. The *dolia* in these warehouses had numbers on them to show the capacity and track custom. At Cosa, *dolia* used at the consumer end of the process did not last very long. You have to have a steady supply of customers asking for the house red to get through a *dolium* worth of product before it goes off through repeated opening. At Rome, there was no such difficulty. Full, sealed *dolia* could stockpile wine until demand spiked and then the warehouse could be emptied as the wine was pumped into smaller containers for distribution and immediate consumption across the city.

The technology of the *dolia* also developed along the way. The Cosan examples are more idiosyncratic and prone to breaking, both during and after construction, and considerably smaller than the later ones. Huge brick factories along the Tiber, such as those owned by Domitia Lucilla, started production. They made much better and more standardized products: few of the *dolia* there broke in use while nearly all the Cosan examples show damage. In tracing the production process, Cheung shows the investment in their creation, anticipating, for example, that a large *dolium* could take as long as three months to dry.

Along the way, Cheung also shows the cultural role of *dolia*. Frequent use of images and texts reveal Romans' familiarity with the *dolium*, even long after its time as the principle vessel of the wine industry had passed. Meanwhile, the evidence of extravagant villas such as that of the Quintilii along the Via Appia shows that *dolia* were a central prop in villa spectacle as estate-owners embellished areas of wine production to create an opulent vista in which guests could observe as entertainment the production of the wine they were glugging (71).

The features that made the *dolium* such a success also contributed to its downfall. In the end, the *dolium* appears to have given way to the barrel. Barrels are an interesting choice: fundamentally they are much worse for the job with their tendency to leak, nevertheless their manoeuvrability (lighter, rollable, dismantlable) show up the disadvantages of the expensive, cumbersome *dolia*, many of which were simply paved over to save the labour investment of digging them out.

This is an exceptionally well-written and constructed book. At each stage, the broader contexts of production and consumption are fully explained so that the *dolium*'s

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

impact on the wider economy is clear. The interaction between object and human users and the effects of each on the other are carefully traced. The sequences which rely on conjuring scenarios, such as the itinerant tinker, are evocative and imaginative without straying into fantasy. It is an excellent example of what the approach of object biography can give to our understanding of the ancient world.

Elena Walter-Karydis's *Die Athener und ihre Gräber* was originally published by De Gruyter in 2015 but now appears in an English translation, bringing a well-respected book to Anglophone students.[9] It is a crucial resource not only because it analyses and illustrates a huge number of funerary images (all your favourites, such as Dexileos and Hegeso, are here) but reconnects them with their original physical contexts, from which they are so often extrapolated. The classical *stelai* with which we are so familiar become quite different prospects when pictured in precincts alongside other *stelai*, stone *lekythoi*, and animals, such as lions, dogs, or even Sirens performing laments. Returning these *stelai* to these precincts and *kouroi* to their grave mounds, not to mention linking them back to their epigrams, allows for a much clearer understanding of how they engaged passers-by.

The book progresses chronologically, starting from geometric burial pits surmounted by imageless stone or wooden *stelai* and large ceramic libation vessels (empty-bottomed to allow libations to reach the dead beneath), to archaic mounds with their *kouroi* and tall *stelai* and then, acknowledging the 50-years-or-so gap, to the *stelai* and family precincts of the classical period that emerge around 430 BCE. The gap is crucial: the funerary images and monuments that emerge after it show not only a change in form and style but in iconography, which stresses the family rather than individual graves and a collective awareness of loss. The intertwining of all these changes is the key feature of the argument. The monuments of the archaic period place emphasis on the individual represented by an image (in the round or in relief form) and name. The epigram never includes patronymics and make no reference to family or civic affiliations. The image, with its blank and smiling archaic face, implies a human devoid of the facility of contemplation, totally unaware of its own death. By contrast, the classical *stelai* show the dead and living together (often to the extent that it is unclear who is who), classical form allowing for an expression of self-awareness and poses that allow figures to interact with each other. This empathy is reflected in the precincts themselves which stress family relationships, often containing several generations of one family. The vast majority of the book is taken up by investigating the iconography of the *stelai*, suggesting conventions and rules for showing the dead, though as Walter-Karydis often admits, these rules are very malleable: whilst married women often sit, they do not always do so and handshakes are not always between equals. The ultimate idea is that the grave-markers of different periods reveal the collective mentality of different generations of Athenians and their attitude towards death. A consistent thread is the *geras thanonton*, the honouring of the dead which is the duty of those still living, a service shown most directly in the geometric vessels that show the laying-out of the corpse or funerary processions, similar scenes painted on

[9] *The Athenians and their Graves*. By Elena Walter-Karydi. Berlin, Boston, De Gruyter, 2024. Pp. xvi + 454. 5 colour + 231 b/w illustrations. Hardback £100, ISBN: 978-3-11-071497-5] (ebook also available).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ceramic surfaces: funerary *loutrophoi* and clay plaques that decorated Archaic mud-brick tombs.

A particular feature throughout all is the lack of delineation between different status groups: whilst wealth might be reflected by the size of a grave and the extravagancies of grave goods and sculptural embellishment, there is no obvious iconography or formal properties that show difference, even in the earliest pre-democratic years. Metics sit in their *klismos* chairs just as the wealthiest Athenian male might. The exceptions, of course, are the war dead, buried collectively without patronymics, severed from their family and claimed for the state.

Nevertheless, such a claim is in conflict with the emotional family connections evidenced by the cenotaphs set up for sons in their own family grave precincts – which is presumably why Dexileos is not the only member of the fallen whose family was not able fully to conform with that custom.

There are, inevitably, some aspects of the argument that are not as convincing as others. It is not clear why, on geometric vases, viewers should assume that the corpse laid out in the mourning scenes is supposed to be that of the deceased (why should that scene be any more biographical than the scenes of warfare on the rear of the vessels [41])? The variety of classical *stelai* seems to suggest that actually rules and expectations were a little less definitive than an academic gaze might seek. The idea that they show a specific death seems pretty clear as a general principle, with the consciousness of the passing experienced variously on the *stelai* by mourners of the deceased. On the other hand, the two modes by which the dead are imagined to demonstrate this awareness – by either engaging with or withdrawing from the world, their family and belongings – seem not to demonstrate a consistency of expectation on the part of consumers.

Most difficult is a reluctance to use the words 'slave' or 'enslaved'. Instead, these people are referred to as 'servants' and 'nurses', rather occluding the uncomfortable truths behind the warm relationships professed in the imagery on *stelai*. This tendency is tackled as a deliberate decision (327), justified by that apparent warmth. However, whether that warmth reflects reality, and there is plenty of comparative evidence for complex relationships between the enslaved and their owners, that emotional attachment does not override the material facts of the enslaved person's presence in the family group.

The books ends necessarily with the end of the grave *stelai* and an unanswerable question about what it might imply about psychological attitudes towards death, families, and individuals. How could a grave form that was moving towards expressing more grief die out forever because of a political edict of Demetrios of Phaleron? By the time that ban seems to have lifted, Athenian men had taken the opportunity to return to civic forms of commemoration that ensured their own names would be honoured into the future but utterly occluded that of their family members. Wives, daughters, 'servants', and 'nurses' alike are lost from archaeological view.

SHELLEY HALES

University of Bristol, UK
Shelley.Hales@bristol.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0017383524000251

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383524000251 Published online by Cambridge University Press