otherwise) of early Greek society. Nor does C. avoid touching on early Greek religion and the emergence of the *polis*, neither topic being one that can be intelligibly discussed without reference to some notion of early Greek society.

Who, then, is this book for? In scrupulously avoiding social questions, it does not appear to be aimed primarily at students (who will need a guide for such controversies), nor at a younger generation of postgraduate or postdoctoral scholars. It does indeed shed new light, but on some very old questions. C. has written a book for his contemporaries, and we still lack a truly up-to-date synthesis of the early Iron Age of Greece.

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ARCHAIC GREEK STATES

M. Kõiv: *Ancient Tradition and Early Greek History. The Origins of States in Early-Archaic Sparta, Argos and Corinth.* Pp. 427, maps. Tallinn: Avita Publishers, 2003. Paper. ISBN: 9985-2-0807-2.

The task that Mait Kõiv sets himself in this book is both historiographical and historical—namely, 'to investigate the value of the tradition about the early Archaic history of Argos, Sparta and Corinth . . . and to consider in which way this what [*sic*] can be relied on in these accounts could shape our understanding of the development of these regions in the given period' (p. 33). The problem, all too familiar to anybody who studies archaic Greece, is that the vast majority of our narrative notices for this period derive from Hellenistic and Roman authors writing centuries after the events they purport to describe. K. seeks to establish the classical source for these authors—Ephoros, more often than not—but then argues that such synthetic accounts are based on oral traditions whose basic stability is guaranteed by the fact that their centrality to community consciousness imposed limits on free invention. Many of the events described—e.g. the Spartan conquest of Lakonia and Messenia, the destruction of Argolic Asine, the colonization of the west, the oligarchy of the Bakkhiads at Korinth, and the legislation of Lykourgos—seem to date from the eighth century and, by setting them against the evident structural changes documented in the material record at this time, K. concludes that they constitute valuable traces of the pivotal process whereby states emerged in the Peloponnese.

K. begins (Chapter 1) by describing the nature of the available evidence and by defending what might be termed a 'neo-positivist' method against the scepticism that is currently popular before turning to a summary of the literary sources and archaeological evidence (Chapter 2). He next (Chapter 3) defends Pausanias' eighth-century dating for Spartan expansion against classical authors (Pindar, Herodotos, Ephoros), who dated it immediately after the Heraklid invasion, pointing out how Sparta's hegemony was articulated mythically by subordinating the Amyklaian 'Tyndarid' genealogy to that of Sparta (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 considers the origins of the Lakonian *perioikoi* and helots, as well as the legislation attributed to Lykourgos, whose association with Spartan *eunomia* was, according to K., already well established by the time of Tyrtaios.

Following a summary of literary accounts of the early history of Argos and Korinth (Chapter 6), K. examines (in Chapter 7) the evidence for the Argive king/tyrant Pheidon, preferring the eighth-century date that Ephoros and Pausanias

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assign to him over Herodotos' early sixth-century date. Chapter 8 argues that Argos exercised an early hegemony over the neighbouring communities of the Argive plain, even if they enjoyed some limited internal autonomy. State-formation in the Korinthia is then compared with the reconstruction proposed for the Argolid (Chapter 9), while a conclusion (Chapter 10) is followed by a non-committal appendix that discusses whether Ephoros synchronized the return of the Herakleidai with the beginning or end of Temenos' generation. It is greatly to be regretted that the book is riddled with innumerable errors (mainly of a grammatical or typographic nature, though the hill opposite the acropolis at Asine is called Barbouna, not Braurona [pp. 46, 51–2], and the Kalaurian amphiktyony is supposed to have connected Minyan Orkhomenos with eastern, rather than western, Peloponnesian sites [p. 96]).

The reader who has the patience to wade through the detailed arguments, which are sometimes heavy-going and often repetitive, will be—indeed, should be—impressed by the depth of K.'s scholarship, his familiarity with both the literary and material evidence, and the ingenuity he brings to bear in teasing information out of scattered and isolated literary notices. And yet there are occasions when the method of argumentation is decidedly curious. K. is certainly right to question whether we can automatically assume that an earlier author (*x*) was actually unaware of information that he fails to provide but that appears in a later author (*y*). It does not, however, logically follow that *y* would only follow a tradition that he knew was at variance with *x*'s information if it rested on better or earlier authority. So, for K., those fifth- and fourth-century authors who attributed Spartan *eunomia* to Lykourgos could only have contradicted Tyrtaios' silence on the matter if they were following a tradition that must be at least as old as Tyrtaios (pp. 195–6). Similar argumentation is employed to defend Pausanias' eighth-century dating of Spartan expansion (pp. 137–40) and to dismiss Herodotos' sixth-century date for Pheidon (p. 261), though at least there exists some supporting evidence for these cases. It is not that K. is necessarily wrong: a later author *could* be following a more creditable tradition than an earlier one. But one wonders whether this is a more 'obvious explanation' (p. 261) than that there was a change in the circumstances that required legitimation through (quasi-)historical narratives.

This brings us to the reliability of the oral tradition. K. is certainly not oblivious to the problems involved in evaluating this type of evidence (pp. 23–8), but his argument that an oral 'tradition' is more stable than an oral 'history' because it is of import to communal identity rather than family concerns (p. 29) is by no means self-apparent. Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 1.16) noted that the Argive genealogist Akousilaos frequently 'corrected' Hesiod and that the later fifth-century writer Hellanikos often contradicted Akousilaos—something that seems to be supported by the surviving fragments. The obvious cautionary tale is provided by the honours accorded Harmodios and Aristogeiton, credited—wrongly, but very shortly after the act—with having liberated Athens from tyranny. One sometimes suspects that, prior to the synthetic histories of the fifth and fourth centuries, the exercise of 'communal control' over tradition to preserve its transmission to posterity was a matter of supreme indifference to the Greeks.

The principal historical conclusion—that state-formation in the Peloponnese can be dated to the eighth century—is, of course, hardly a novelty. Ironically, what has been a virtual orthodoxy since the seminal article by Victor Ehrenberg (*JHS* 57 [1937], 147–59) is currently being challenged by historians, who prefer a more 'gradualist' interpretation of state formation. Part of the problem is that K. never really defines what he means by a state: on p. 68, 'statehood' is associated with civic identity signalled through cult, but on the previous page, with reference to the Argolid, it is linked to 'the

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emergence of a collegial mentality' among the élites, suggesting that social stratification is an important element of state-formation. It matters which, because both literary and archaeological evidence suggests that the two processes were not necessarily synchronous, with the former possibly preceding the latter. Also absent is any discussion of demography and its implications. For example, the most generous recent estimate for the total population of eighth-century Argos is around 2,500 (based on a density figure of thirty to fifty inhabitants per hectare, suggested by Marja Vink, in H. Damgard Andersen et al. [edd.], *Urbanization in the Mediterranean in the 9th to 6th Centuries BC* [Copenhagen, 1997], pp. 111–41). Such a population level hardly squares with K.'s picture of states jostling for hegemony at a supraregional level.

In the end, it is a matter of faith. Those who continue to believe that a narrative history, akin to what can be constructed for the classical period, can be pushed back into the early archaic period will find a champion in K. The agnostics will find little here to convince them otherwise.

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ETHNOS OR *POLIS*?

C. MORGAN: *Early Greek States Beyond the Polis*. Pp. xii + 326, maps, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Cased, £55. ISBN: 0-415-08996-4.

This is a powerful, but somewhat confusing and perhaps a little confused, book. There is no doubting its scholarship. A bibliography of some 1,000 items tells its own tale (though so does the fact that it contains over fifty errata). But the question has to be asked—and M., to her great credit, is fearless in explicitly asking it—whether the whole is as great as the sum of its many excellent parts. On the one hand, the ambition to redraw, literally, the map of early Greek history (*c.* 800–500 B.C.E.) is quite admirable. The gaping blank north of the Corinthian Gulf on, for example, Robin Osborne's map of Greece and the central Mediterranean in his introductory *Greek History* (Routledge, 2004) is one of the gaps that M. aims precisely to fill: her study is fixedly addressed to the large areas of mainland Greece on either side of the Corinthian gulf extending from Thessaly through Phokis and E. Lokris to Akhaia and Arkadia. On the other hand, given the actual state of the archaeological database, and given the instrinsic provisionality of all material evidence (from wherever or whenever), a fundamentally archaeological study such as this could never be anything more than what M. herself calls 'a first small step' (p. 222). But then just a couple of pages later (p. 225) she has convinced herself, and tries to convince us, that her dense, profusely illustrated but not easily readable monograph constitutes not just one but two 'major steps forward' (p. 225). Can she have it both ways?

That depends entirely on what the book's aims and objectives are taken to be. The maximum programme, so to speak, is formulated thus (p. 222):

> The long-term aim must be to document the palimpsest of individual and group identities expressed in a variety of ways, including the acquisition and disposition of material goods, the creation of visual and oral group images (including collective myth-history) and the deployment of names, and to assess their relative weighting in different places, periods, and contexts and from different perspectives.

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