overlapping with other publications (as the obsessive self-citation shows). N. claims (p. ix n. 3) to have 'rethought' his earlier books, but I failed to detect the significant advance that would have given this publication a satisfactory rationale.

University of Leeds MALCOLM HEATH
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SOLON AND 'NEW CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY'

J. A. ALMEIDA: *Justice as an Aspect of the Polis Idea in Solon's Political Poems. A Reading of the Fragments in Light of the Researches of New Classical Archaeology.* (*Mnemosyne* Supplementum 243.) Pp. xviii + 284. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003. Cased, €80, US$95. ISBN: 90-04-13002-0.

Solon has always given classicists trouble. He is a member of the small club of ancient Greeks who both were important political figures and left a significant literary *oeuvre*. As a result, a comprehensive assessment of Solon demands expertise in a large set of disciplines, including social, cultural, legal, and political history, literary criticism, and archaeology. In *Justice as an Aspect of the Polis Idea in Solon's Political Poems*, Joseph A. Almeida tries to address this difficulty. He draws on a range of disciplines in order to illuminate *dikē*, one of the key words in Solon's writings.

In particular, A. is concerned with bringing the achievements of what is often called 'new classical archaeology' (associated with Anthony Snodgrass and Ian Morris, among others) to bear on Solon's fragments. Over the past thirty years, 'new classical archaeologists' have been able to make a very strong case for the exceptionality of Athens in the seventh and early sixth centuries. The material record, in particular burial patterns and the absence of a major extra-urban sanctuary, suggests the obliteration in Athens (but hardly anywhere else) of many standard aspects of *polis* organization from the early seventh century until well into the sixth century. Power and political participation in Athens seem to have been more exclusively the domain of a few than in most other Greek communities. A. reads Solon's poetry, with its emphasis on the balancing of the interests of different social groupings, against this background. *Dikē*, the particular theme of the book, is 'Solon's poetic representation of the *polis* ideal as he understood it in the context of the real political troubles of his own Athens' (p. xvi). In other words, *dikē* terminology, which is relatively frequent in the surviving texts, is at the heart of Solon's attempt to bring Athenian political and social organization in line with the rest of Greece.

The meat of this argument is contained in Chapter 5, a reading of frr. 4 and 36 West (= 3 and 30 Gentili-Prato) with particular reference to *dikē*, drawing on the suggestions of the 'new classical archaeologists'. Chapter 4 is devoted to the lexicography of *dikē*. The preceding chapters serve to set the scene: consecutively, A. sets out previous scholarship on Solon as a historical figure (Chapter 1) and on Solon's poetry as literature (Chapter 2), as well as the relevant aspects of 'new classical archaeology' (Chapter 3). Together, these three chapters argue that historical and literary approaches alone will not yield a reliable interpretation of *dikē* in Solon, and that Solon scholars should, therefore, make more use of archaeology.

A.'s project is welcome. In recent years scholars focusing mostly on either texts or material culture have come to realize the mutual benefit of collaboration and exchange.

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A.'s book will make a contribution to this development. There are not many revolutionary new insights, but A.'s use of the exceptionality of Athens for his reading of Solon often works well and leads to a few interesting points of detail.

Welcome as A.'s project is, though, to my mind the book has obvious drawbacks. First, pacing is an issue. Quite long stretches of Chapters 1–3 (pp. 1–174) are taken up by summaries of previous scholarly work. Arguably, A. could have made his methodological points more swiftly, using some of the space differently, perhaps to give the overall argument a broader focus, looking further beyond *dikē* and beyond two fragments.

Secondly, at times A. puts perhaps too much faith in the objectivity of archaeological findings. There can be no doubt that the dates and nature of the literary and historical sources set clear limits for a purely text-based approach to Solon. A. must be right to point to the importance of the material culture of Solon's own time as a further source. However, I think it is misleading to refer to the '*polis* idea' as presented by the new classical archaeologists as an 'objective background' (p. xv) or 'objective standard' (cover text). Archaeologists, too, need to interpret; and a further degree of interpretation is needed when their findings are applied to literary texts. For example, A. (appealing to Morris) adopts the terms 'agathoi' and 'kakoi' as though they referred to social groups that are clearly identifiable and whose changing fortunes archaeologists have established. But these terms are borrowed from literary texts, like Theognis, which often demonstrate just how much room for disagreement there was in calling somebody 'good' or 'bad'. It would probably be more helpful to treat archaeological work as just one more element that contributes to the overall picture, rather than as equipping us with objective referents.

Leading on from this, thirdly and finally, A. says little about the function or context of Solon's poetry itself. Solon's performance context has been debated at length recently. After a period of almost exclusive emphasis on the symposium, scholars appear to be prepared again to envisage different contexts, and hence different effects and functions. We will probably never find certain answers to these questions. But the questions need to be debated if one wants to come to a judgement about the place of justice (or indeed any other socio-political concept) in Solon's poetry.

In sum, then, this book is a useful reminder of the need to blend literary, historical, and archaeological methods, but it is perhaps not as successful as it might have been.

The Open University FELIX BUDELMANN
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EMPEDOCLES DIVIDED

J. BOLLACK: *Empédocle*: Les purifications. *Un projet de paix universelle*. Édité, traduit et commenté. (Collection Points, Série Essais, 498.) Pp. 144. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2003. Paper. ISBN: 2-02-056915-9.

Since his monumental commentary in the sixties (J. Bollack, *Empédocle* [Paris, 1965–9]), Jean Bollack has been one of the leading interpreters of Empedocles, hence this edition of the *Purifications* has been eagerly awaited. However, there are serious problems with the book. Due to the publication in 1999 of Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi's edition of the new Strasbourg fragments (A. Martin and O. Primavesi

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