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Cover illustration from Robin Rönnlund in this volume, p. 123, fig. 6. Photograph by Robin Rönnlund. Courtesy of Ministry of Culture and Sports—Directorate for the Administration of the National Archive of Monuments—Department for the Administration of the Historical Archive of Antiquities and Restorations.

# Book reviews

J.C. Wright & M. Dabney with contributions by P. Acheson, S.E. Allen, K.M. Forste, P. Halstead, S.M.A. Hoffmann, A. Karabatsoli, K. Kaza-Papageorgiou, B. Lis, R. Mersereau, H. Mommsen, J.B. Rutter, T. Theodoropoulou & J.E. Tomlinson, *The Mycenaean settlement on Tsoungiza Hill* (Nemea Valley Archaeological Project, 3), Princeton, New Jersey: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens 2020. xlii + 1,191 pp., 503 b/w figs, 150 tables. ISBN 978-0-87661-924-7 (cloth) https://doi.org/10.2972/j.ctv22wtqv8

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The third monograph in the series of the final reports of the Nemea Valley Archaeological Project (hereafter NVAP) publishes, in the more physically manageable two-volume format, the excavation of the settlement that flourished on the Tsoungiza Hill from late Middle Helladic (hereafter MH) to Late Helladic (LH) IIIC Early, following an apparent hiatus from Early Helladic (EH) III. Tsoungiza, located between the Phlious basin and the Nemea valley, had been previously inhabited in the Neolithic (M. Dabney *et al*. *Hesperia* 89:1, 2020, 1–65) and for most of the Early Bronze Age (D.J. Pullen, *Nemea Valley Archaeological Project* vol. 1, 2011).

The volume is edited and for a large part (alongside contributions by 13 other members and collaborators) written by the joint directors of the excavation during its last phase (1984–1986), Mary Dabney and James Wright, but takes fully into account the evidence from previous research in Tsoungiza by Carl Blegen (1924), James Harland (1926–1927), and within the confines of NVAP, by their predecessor Stephen G. Miller (1981–1983). It was also excellent to see that the 1979 rescue excavation by Konstantina Kaza-Papageorgiou for the Archaeological Service has also been integrated in this publication. The presentation is therefore as comprehensive as one could hope for.

Preceded by the 'Acknowledgements', a full 'Table of contents', lists of illustrations and tables (pp. i–xxiv), and the full bibliography and pertinent abbreviations (pp. xxv–xlii), this work is arranged in two parts, with contextual and specialist studies treated in separate volumes with continuous page numbering.

Part 1 ('Context studies', pp. 1–369) begins with an extensive introductory chapter by Dabney and Wright (pp. 1–27), explicating the history, formation, and overall structure and goals of NVAP, following the discovery of the burnt remains of a LH I building in 1981. The chapter includes a good account of the excavation methods (including the admirable co-ordination with earlier excavated areas), the recording and study system, as well as an outline of the structure of the work and the chronological system used (concisely summarized with respect to specific pottery groups and excavated areas in table 1.2). Wright (pp. 29–43) discusses the Bronze Age topography of Tsoungiza Hill, and Phoebe Acheson describes the survey methods and reports on surface Neolithic and Bronze Age ceramic finds (pp. 45–83), where artefact distribution is affected by backfills of earlier excavations in addition to the familiar disturbance and erosion effects.

Dabney and Wright (pp. 85–88) give a concise presentation of the chronological phases (cf. also table 1.2) associated with specific excavated areas. The evidence is further elaborated in the next chapter (pp. 89–302) where Dabney and Wright are joined by Kaza-Papageorgiou (who contributes the section on the 1979 excavation under her supervision, pp. 141–156) in the description of the excavated areas and finds, including plans, stratigraphic sections, excavation photographs, and drawings (some accompanied by photographs) of the finds. Wright and Dabney (pp. 303–346) present separately the results from Harland's excavations, with well-reproduced archival photographs.

The final chapter in Part 1, by Dabney and Wright (pp. 347–369), presents the conclusions of the study. As it draws on the evidence from all contributions, including the specialist studies of Part 2, it must be read even by those that can only afford a cursory glance at this formidable work.

Part 2, issued in a separate volume, is concerned with specialist studies. It begins by an important study by Rebecca Mersereau on building materials and techniques (pp. 373–472), with a much-needed focus on mudbricks, roofing, and especially interior furnishings, including terracotta bins or drains (pp. 458–466). This chapter is particularly important in detailing the evidence for vernacular non-monumental architecture, which is most interesting because a large part of it is contemporary with the rich Shaft Grave assemblages of nearby Mycenae.

Jeremy Rutter has written a massive (pp. 473–818) report on the late MH and early Mycenaean (LH I–II) pottery from Tsoungiza—a book in itself—that must be consulted alongside his previous publication of late MH pottery (*Hesperia* 59:2, 1990, 375–458). Rutter meticulously explains the reasoning of his classification and presentation of the material, as well as the many abbreviations (pp. 728–730) that are used in the no fewer than 25 tables that accompany this chapter. A special highlight in this study is the extensive and thoughtful discussion of LH IIB deposits (pp. 710–727). LH IIIA2 and IIIB1 pottery from Tsoungiza has been published in *Hesperia* by Patrick Thomas (vol. 73:2, 2004, 77–95 with Dabney and Paul Halstead; vol. 74:4, 2005, 451–573; vol. 80:2, 2011, 171–288), who does not author a contribution in this work. This is accompanied by a chapter presenting the results of Neutron Activation Analyses (NAA) of pottery from the site (pp. 819–852), where Rutter (pp. 843–852) comments on the analyses by Sandra M.A. Hoffmann, Jonathan Tomlinson, and Hans Mommsen. These analyses draw a picture of interesting fluctuation within a time frame that may not have lasted more than a century: from an original (late III) ceramic autochthony, to opening up to other sources and especially Aegina in LH I, before being ceramically dependent on sources from either Aegina or the vicinity of Mycenae in LH IIA. Aeginetan input is in decline by the end of LH IIB, leaving the stage—always ceramically speaking—to producers located around Mycenae.

The next chapter, by Bartłomiej Lis, publishes separately the LH cooking pottery deriving mostly from household refuse but also considering material from an important LH IIIA2 ritual feasting deposit (pp. 853–900). Lis's analysis is the first to offer a diachronic survey of such vessels from a single site in the north-east Peloponnese. It has emphasized the diversity in fabrics and the Aeginetan component (especially in LH I and then gradually declining), with an arguable intervention in LH IIIA2 from feast-sponsors within the Argolid, plausibly Mycenae. The interesting point is made (p. 898) that circuits of pottery acquisition from Aegina and Mycenae (the latter site lacking published evidence for substantial Aeginetan imports) were largely distinct. The issue of the acquisition of andesite, the most popular igneous rock material for millstones, is addressed by Wright in his publication of the ground stone tools (pp. 966–1021). Wright suggests Aegina to be the source, but correlation with the occurrence of Aeginetan is not in perfect accordance to the evidence for Aeginetan pottery imports, as andesite increases in LH III (pp. 974–977) when Tsoungiza is ceramically more linked to the area of Mycenae.

Anna Karabatsoli's study of chipped stone production (pp. 901–965) has suggested some remarkably large-scale production of chipped blades or points during LH IIA. Miscellaneous finds (including textile tools, metal tools and weapons, figurines) are published by Dabney and Wright (pp. 1023–1028).

The last three chapters concern the bioarchaeological evidence. Susan Allen and Kathleen Forste (pp. 1029–1062) study archaeobotanical remains, largely fulfilling the primary NVAP goal of an archaeologically integrated study of land use and agricultural practices. The substantial preservation of charred remains in late MH–LH I contexts proved highly fortunate and has allowed glimpses into local viticulture at the onset of the Mycenaean period, as well as the first documentation of garlic from a Bronze Age domestic context in the Greek Mainland (for garlic in Akrotiri on Thera see A. Sarpaki, *Documenta Praehistorica* 48, 2021, 432–445). In the LH IIIA2 "feasting" deposit, the plant species identified were unexceptional, indicating that ordinary foodstuffs were used for such special ritual occasions. The advantage of reliable diachronic survey of archaeobotanical evidence is what makes Tsoungiza special in this field of research. Important new insights are offered by the early investment in vine cultivation prior to the supposed integration of Tsoungiza within the Mycenae polity, as well as the remarkably consistent picture of plant husbandry with barley and lentils being the preferred crops in all phases.

Tatiana Theodoropoulou (pp. 1063–1076) discusses the limited, but nonetheless intriguing, aquatic faunal remains, which, despite the distance of the exploited marine environments, were scarce but present throughout LH III (with LH IIB and LH IIIB1 marking the next two "peaks" after EH II: p. 1066, fig. 16.1).

Halstead (pp. 1077–1158) offers a thorough analysis of the terrestrial faunal remains. Besides confirming the usual dietary preferences (the sheep-goat-pig-cattle quartet, plus occasional dogs and donkeys) and practices (on-site carcass processing), features are noted that might hint at interaction with a large regional centre (presumably Mycenae), such as the underrepresentation of male ovicaprids (sent to Mycenae?). Halstead wisely cautions, however, that faunal assemblages recovered are consumption debris, therefore underrepresenting local husbandry practices, as well as those animals not intend-

ed for consumption, but for breeding or secondary product production (pp. 1152–1153).

The volume concludes with two concordances (pp. 1159–1171: stratigraphic units; pp. 1173–1181: NVAP Inventory and Catalogue numbers) and a satisfactory general index (pp. 1182–1191).

One could wish that material published elsewhere (e.g., by Rutter or Thomas, see above) was also included (or at least more extensively summarized) so that this work would be autonomous, or that the brief treatments of small finds were accompanied by illustrations (most finds are illustrated in Part 1, 89–302). However, the decision not to duplicate information on an already oversized work is certainly understandable.

The proximity of Tsoungiza to Mycenae and the discovery of important LH I and later LH assemblages provides an excellent opportunity to fine-tune our knowledge of a small site in the vicinity of a remarkable power centre (before and after its rise to palatial status) and explore the effects of the development of the latter on the development of the former. Tsoungiza may not have been of more than local importance, but its excellent excavation and publication has definitely provided an invaluable corrective to the image provided by overemphasizing palatial centres at the expense of their hinterland. Dabney and Wright orchestrated an excellent presentation, definitely well worth the wait. The detailed documentation and minute level of analysis are indicative of uncommon scrutiny and testimony to rigorous data-collection (something particularly apparent in the quality of analysis of the bioarchaeological evidence), setting a very high standard indeed for the publication of Aegean settlement sites.

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## E. Rystedt, *Excursions into Greek and Roman imagery* (Classical Foundations), Abingdon: Routledge 2023. 272 pp. 90 b/w illus. ISBN 979-0-414-40906-3 (pb) https://doi.org/10.4324/b22992

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Best known for her excellent work on the Etruscan acroteria of Aquarossa and Murlo and her studies of early (Mycenaean and Geometric) Greek pottery, University of Lund professor Eva Rystedt has embarked on a much more ambitious project, namely classical imagery from the 6th century BC to the 3rd century AD. Wisely, given the vast range of possible material, she approaches this study via six case studies: Athenian vase painting, Pompeian wall painting, Hellenistic gravestones from Smyrna, Roman mythological sarcophagi, two public monuments (Parthenon and the Roman apotheosis reliefs), and coinage. An introduction sets up the framework for her monograph and a conclusion synthesizes the results. Appended to each chapter are helpful commentaries on the scholarly literature, extensive notes, and relevant bibliography. An appendix provides a list of the terms used by the author and her manner of their usage. And finally two indices, one for museum collections and a useful general index, complete the volume.

The first example appears at the end of the 'Introduction', almost as an afterthought. It focuses on an enigmatic wall painting from Pompeii that depicts a Victory crowning an ass who is penetrating a lion. While the image has been subject to various interpretations from the political (allegory of Augustus' conflict with Anthony) to the folkloric (animals acting like humans), Rystedt follows John Clarke in stressing the context, probably a tavern (or brothel?) given the nearby images of Mercury and Dionysos. Another scholar (Christophe Vendries) has pointed out that the Latin *leo* can refer to the female genitalia and so all the imagery is simply part of bawdy popular culture in ancient Rome. This example illustrates one of the tenets of this book, namely that consideration of context is essential to a full understanding of Greek and Roman imagery and its social messaging.

Two dimensional narrative representations, on Attic tableware and Pompeian domestic walls, are the concern of the next two chapters. What Rystedt terms "lifeworld" motifs such as athletics and the symposium predominate in Attic vase painting due to their alignment with Athenian social values. Themes from myth are used as metaphors, for example, heroic abductions like that of Peleus chasing Thetis affirming mortal marriages. When the two—myth and daily life—appear on the same vessel, as they often do, they together reinforce the message to the viewer/user. Greek mythological pictures that decorate Roman houses reflect the status and aspirations of their owners in more public rooms, while scenes from daily life appear in private quarters.

Funerary monuments make up much of the central content of this book from modest grave *stelai* to monumental marble sarcophagi. The figural gravestones from Smyrna and Roman mythological sarcophagi are viewed as responses to deep psychological preoccupations albeit via very different types of narrative. Greek *stelai* reflect the "lifeworld" of the deceased while the allegorical narratives on marble sarcophagi reference aspirations for love and eventual happiness. The text takes a deep dive into the imagery of the Phaeton sarcophagi followed by brief investigations of Endymion and Dionysos.

Moving from the private sphere of imagery into the public, the author begins the chapter on civic monuments with a