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# Opuscula

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Department of Archaeology and Ancient History  
Uppsala University  
Box 626  
SE-751 26 Uppsala, Sweden  
[secretary@ecsi.se](mailto:secretary@ecsi.se)

**EDITOR:**

Dr Jenni Hjohlman, Stockholm  
[jenni.hjohlman@antiken.su.se](mailto:jenni.hjohlman@antiken.su.se)

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Cover: see Fischer in this volume, p. 323, *Fig. 22b*.

verse aims and interests that have produced the archaeological record; ranging from intensive artefact survey to small-scale rescue work and accidental discoveries. The approach also overcomes the problem of site identification within previous research.

Through this breakdown of sites into components the archaeological remains as such become the primary unit for the investigation instead all the material available at a specific place. I find this deconstructivist approach both innovative and useful, and should be of use to others working with regional investigations and assemblages of sites identified primarily through a diverse range of both systematic and unsystematic archaeological fieldwork.

The second part of *Boeotian Landscapes* presents the landscape analysis performed on the basis of the assembled GIS data, utilizing the methods introduced in Part I. Chapter II.1 describes in detail the physical topography and environment of Boeotia, while Chapter II.2 describes the state of archaeological research in the region. The next Chapter, II.3, forms the bulk of the study and is concerned with the landscape analysis of different Boeotian *chorai*. EF uses John Fossey's extensive study of ancient Boeotian settlements (*Topography and population of ancient Boeotia*, Chicago 1988) as the point of departure for the geographical division of the various *chorai* (primarily the territory of individual *poleis*), though there are some variations in regards to the area divisions employed compared to Fossey's study. For example, while Fossey treats the *chorai* of the three Corinthian Gulf *poleis*, Siphai, Chorseiai and Thisbe, in separate chapters, EF treats them as one unit (II.3.10, 'Three small chorai to the Gulf of Corinth: Siphai, Thisbe, Chorseiai'), though this approach has no direct impact on the treatment of settlement chambers and the diachronic landscape analysis.

The same analysis is carried out for all of the different *chorai* that make up the sub-chapters of the book, providing evidence on the topographical setting, the identifiable boundaries (physical and political) of these geographical units, and the different physical land units (i.e. the total percentage of land belonging to three different landscape types: Plains, Hilly landscape, and Mountainous landscape). The resources available to settlements in each *chora* are also dealt with, based primarily on the classified land capability.

The archaeological record is subsequently presented, including the nature of archaeological fieldwork carried out in the geographical unit as well as the identified archaeological components. Departing from the material remains an analysis of the pattern of settlement and range of identifiable activities are presented (such as settlement hierarchies, farming, burial activities, etc.), focusing primarily on the Prehistoric and Greco-Roman periods (encompassing Early Iron Age to Late Roman material). A slight problem here is the treatment

of Classical and Hellenistic towers, which are simply regarded as part of the regional defensive network. Although some of these towers may be military in nature, previous discussions on these features of the Greek rural landscape have shown that in many cases they may rather be interpreted as part of extensive agricultural installations (cf. Morris & Papadopoulos in *AJA* 109, 2005, 155–225). An investigation of towers and their geographical correlation to local resources (such as fertile or mid-fertile land) would have been highly interesting. A long-term perspective of settlement and environment is subsequently presented in each *chora* chapter, placing the Prehistoric and Greco-Roman pattern in connection with later post-Antique periods. I find this approach useful in regards to the discussion on how much of the settlement pattern is dictated by the physical environment and local resources.

Overall the study is an important addition to Greek landscape archaeology and will be the standard work to consult for anyone working with the history and archaeology of the Boeotian landscape. The analysis is highly relevant for understanding the economic potential and restraints of large settlement sites in the region, during different periods. The appendices and CD contain significant amounts of information on the Boeotian archaeological record. I am, however, slightly surprised that no actual GIS shape files or surface layers, produced as part of the analysis, were included on the CD. This would have been beneficial for anyone working with GIS and I believe it is necessary that the scholarly community starts sharing such GIS resources amongst each other. Despite this minor criticism this study has set a benchmark for GIS-based landscape research in Greece.

ANTON BONNIER  
Department of Historical Studies  
Box 200  
University of Gothenburg  
SE-405 30 Göteborg  
anton.bonnier@gu.se

G. López Monteagudo, M.L. Neira Jiménez, 'Mosaico', in *Arte Romano de la Bética. Mosaico. Pintura. Manufacturas*, ed. P. León, Sevilla: Focus-Abengoa 2010. 381 pp., 482 illus. ISBN 978-84-89895-27-0.

A magnificent edition, the book constitutes the last volume of a series of three (the earlier two cover architecture and sculpture) about *Roman art in Baetica* (ed. P. León), based on the 2008 exhibition in Seville on Roman heritage in Andalusia. This volume deals with mosaic, wall painting and minor arts and these three parts, together with the two earlier volumes in the series, centre around the room in the domestic space. The focus of all parts is placed on the craft and the artistic aspect of the material and on use, the movement of fashion and the way it spreads over an area. The present review concerns only

the part on mosaics, which comprises the most extensive part of the book.

The short and concise introductory chapter (Chapter 1) summarizes the long existence of the mosaic art in the Mediterranean. It recalls the double function of mosaic art as a protecting floor and as a décor with a strong potential, which gave it a place in many environments. However, this was also the reason why it, for a long time, was considered to belong to the minor arts, despite its capacity to provide us with valuable information about Antiquity. Mosaics have become, to an increasing extent, an extraordinary source of knowledge, because of their long existence, vast expansion and by their quantity, and also through the way they were constantly developed and adapted, and thus adopted a regional character. Additionally, the imagery of the mosaics is an important source of knowledge, partly because of their function as a frame of connecting values in the Roman Empire; partly because they act as a prime witness of the different provinces of the Roman Empire with their local diversities.

Lately, many new mosaic finds have been made in Baetica, which have contributed substantially to cast a new light on the region, but also on the whole of the *Hispania Antiqua*. Chapter 2 ('The land of Baetica') focuses on their development over time and is divided into three sections.

The first, 'From *Signinum* to *tessellatum*', provides detailed information on the origin and development of different techniques of mosaic used, as well as composition, patterns, motifs and style, presented together with a display of examples of occurrences in Baetica from this richly illustrated work.

The second section, 'On craftsmen and workshops', is concerned with the people, the knowledge, the material, and the techniques and not least the models that were widespread and varied around the Mediterranean. Further, the author reasons about how local variations can be used to identify workshops and teach us about the interaction between the two agents in the production process, the producers and the consumers.

In the third section, 'The large centres of production', particular attention is paid to the three economic centres in the area, Astigi (Ecija), Corduba (Cordoba), and Itálica/Hispalis (Seville), as these constituted the three large centres of mosaic production with their own specific features. Occurring in public buildings as well as in the private homes of the elite, the figurative mosaics of *opus tessellatum* have a particular capacity to transmit messages over time and space. Particularly fruitful here are the thoughts about the role played by *mimesis* (imitation) for preferences and choice; consequently also for the distribution of motifs, styles and compositions.

Chapter 3 ('The imagery of Baetica') is the most extensive chapter, presenting the enormous stock of mosaics of *opus tessellatum* in the region, mainly dating from the Imperial period. It is underlined that both the motifs and their ico-

nography long belonged to the conceptions of the Mediterranean world and appeared and reappeared in different forms, settings and media. Some representations prevailed and were spread through the process of continuous interpretation and reinterpretation by creative craftsmen. They appear with similar traditional iconography as in the rest of the Roman repertoire, but with combinations, frequency and predilection which give them their own regional identity.

The presentation starts with a concise and excellent overview of the possible different readings of mythological images. The reader is thus introduced to how to approach and understand the complicated and often synthetically represented scenes that can both be interpreted *per se*, or according to the, often moral, questions they raise, in addition to the abstract concepts in form of allegories and personifications.

In the following sections the reader is invited on a guided tour among the mythological motifs in Baetica, through a presentation of their written sources (Homer, Hesiod and others); including a necessary presentation of the possible variations. The two most popular mythological themes in the area are presented under separate headings and hence the authors show why Bacchus and his *thiasos*, and the marine world, respectively, have played such a role in a region made rich from agricultural and aquatic products and their export over its watercourses, rivers and sea.

Among the rest of the mythological themes, presented together as one heading, the so-called "loves of Zeus" dominate, with a predilection for the rape of Europa, followed by certain heroic themes and Nilotic scenes. Purely allegorical themes are also common, particularly related to the fertility and bounty of the earth and to notions of Time. The last part in the section concerns the motifs related to the sphere of leisure and economy, here presented under the term *Otium et negotium*.

In Chapter 4 ('Recapitulations'), it is underlined that the region's mosaics form part of the Roman world, but with preferences for motifs expressing prosperity, fertility and harmony besides unity between man on earth and the celestial sphere, often through fusion of many components into a whole.

In all, the part of the volume on mosaics illuminates the interaction between the symbolism of the motifs, the makers and the consumers. What is especially interesting in this truly well-read method of using the different literary sources to reveal and follow the pictorial versions of the myths, their narrative and developments, is that it casts new light on the work of the craftsmen. Moreover the method acts as a guide, leading the reader through this largely complex pictorial material with its many different layers of communicative powers.

The two authors' use of the facial expressions, bodily poses and gestures gives the material a new and deeper meaning and enriches the reading. Especially interesting is this notion concerning the interpretative importance of the variations of the

representation, which accordingly influences the meaning, including the symbolic significance, in the mythological narratives.

This is effectively illustrated through the representations of the rape of Europe by Zeus (pp. 121–127) existing in different versions and particularly popular in Baetica. These are markedly interesting, since the emotional and chronological narrative, with its many different phases, is displayed through the expressions in face and posture, seemingly according to a text from the Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (II: 836–875), which underlines the emotional development in the young woman from curiosity, over fright to the final state of delight and consummate love. These hints, together with some further details in the iconography, enable the viewer to follow in an exact way the narrative of this particular version and interpretation of the myth from the beginning to the end.

Another excellent example of this extended reading is the convincing guiding through and detailed analysis of the mosaic of Polyphemus and Galate (pp. 110–111), in the scene with the young nymph whose face reveals alarm and dismay when looking at the cyclop who is courting her. The original episode, first appearing in a text "The Cyclops", by the poet Philoxenus of Cythera (435–380 BC), Syracuse, and later re-interpreted by some of the poets of Alexandria and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XIII: 759), is here figuring in a scene presented as unique by the authors, with its complex message, referring to a particular passage in the texts which demands particular knowledge both of the producer to represent and the viewer to be able to decipher it.

These two examples of an inventive reading suggest that these variations of the images, with their subsequent slightly diverse emotional meanings, are due to precise literary sources that represent different phases or even episodes of one and the same myth, rather than pure pictorial variations of a cartoon or basic model *per se*.

A supplementary benefit from this combination of traditional classical scholarship in the field with new openings of interpretations between specific text and iconographic variations, I suggest, is that it opens the many times unnecessarily locked discussion about the role of the craftsmen and their potential independence, both toward possible readymade cartoons and toward the presumed buyers. This concerns the craftsmen's literary knowledge, manual capacity and artistic talent, through hand and eye, to shape a version of a myth, through the use of facial expressions and body language, and to express its deeper meaning and thus communicate it to the public.

To conclude, this well-written study of mosaics with its broad and scientifically updated content recreates, in an appealing way, with its often new and frequently exceptional illustrative material, the lost Baetica, *Hispania Antiqua*. It has

succeeded well in its intention to appeal to various groups of readers using a fruitful and inventive new approach regarding antique visual culture. The lavish illustrations allow the possibility to study the subject thoroughly, both the mosaics *in situ*, in museums and in private collections in Andalusia, and their place in the general history of mosaics. It would be an excellent course book as it presents a remarkably didactic way to learn the myths of antiquity—and to teach others—as well as it is of great interest for the general public, as certainly also for the keen scholar in the field.

MAJA KRAMER  
Department of Historical Studies  
University of Gothenburg  
maja.kramer@class.gu.se  
Postal address:  
Hagens stationsväg 24  
SE-426 71 Västra Frölunda

*Mesohelladika. La Grèce continentale au Bronze Moyen. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'École française d'Athènes, en collaboration avec l'American School of Classical Studies at Athens et le Netherlands Institute in Athens, Athènes, 8–12 mars 2006 (BCH Suppl., 52), eds. A. Philippa-Touchais, G. Touchais, S. Voutsaki & J. Wright, Athens 2010. 1046 pp. ISBN 978-2-86958-210-1.*

This impressive volume, the acta from the conference in Athens in March 2006 on the Greek Mainland during the Middle Helladic period, organized by the French School at Athens, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the Netherlands Institute in Athens, is in many respects impossible to review, at least with any ambition to give a fair treatment to or even mention all, 63 papers and 28 posters, of the well written and interesting contributions in Greek, English and French. The ambition of the conference was to cover the Middle Helladic culture in all of mainland Greece, to give it an identity as a cultural epoch in its own right, not only as a materially rather boring predecessor to the Mycenaean, or in the words of Oliver Dickinson, in his stimulating introduction that gives a background to the current state of discussions within Middle Helladic studies: one cannot judge a culture simply by its material manifestations (p. 13).

A preface by the directors of the organizing Schools and an introduction by the editors are followed by a list and chronological subdivisions and of abbreviations of publications. Other bibliographical references are found in the footnotes of each paper. On 1000-plus pages around 100 scholars then present their views and ideas of various aspects of the Middle Helladic period, ranging from presentation of new material, topographical issues to symbolism, organization and economy to production, technology and methodology. The presentations are organized in seven sections of various length and