Rui Morais. *Greek Art from Oxford to Portugal and Back Again: Tribute to Maria Helena Da Rocha-Pereira,* with a foreword by Delfim Leão. pp. vi + 57. 65 colour and b/w illustrations. 2017. Oxford: Archaeopress. ISBN 978-1-78491-586-5 paperback £20.00. ISBN 978-1-78491-587-2 e-publication £12.50.

This is really a book about the transmission of motifs in ancient art, and essentially consists of a series of examples linked by a very brief and somewhat idiosyncratic text which appears to have had no editing; the penultimate sentence reads 'The theme of the migration and circulation of images, subject to certain coordinates and the complexities of historical times, manifests in an anachronistic manner, lost in the collective memory' (p.54).

The first chapter introduces the issue of the production of copies and the issue of how motifs got transmitted and then proceeds to give evidence for use of squared up drawings to transmit designs in second-millennium BCE Egypt.

The second chapter deals with the transmission of designs in the Greek world. The initial pages are devoted to wooden and terracotta plaques, apparently simply because in Egypt such plaques had been used to transmit designs, and so in the Greek world they could have been, even though the author has no evidence that any of those illustrated were being so used. We are then given the evidence of painted imitation of Parthenon metopes on a Macedonian tomb at Lefkadia, followed by cases where similar images are found in vase-painting and sculpture. Morais asks (p.18) 'are these examples testaments to cross-influences between sculptors and vase-painters?', and answers 'Probably not'. But he does think (implausibly) that we need to presuppose pattern books to explain the production of near identical images of Herakles fighting the Nemean lion by the Red-line Painter.

The third chapter moves to the Roman world, opening with the 'lapidary phrase by Horatio' ('*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*') and acknowledgement that we are dealing with 'creative assimilation', and proceeding via drawings on papyrus and the existence of small paintings (*tabellae*) to issues of Roman wall paintings copying Greek originals, and a marble relief from Sirmium reproducing the iconography of the Gemma Augustea, and concluding with an (undated) textile fragment (bizarrely referred to as 'a fragment of a slate') from the Montserrat Monastery Museum in Barcelona showing Heracles and the Nemean lion.

The final chapter takes three case studies, the three Graces, the inebriated Dionysus, and the Knidian Aphrodite, in each case producing a number of examples that trace the motif across the Roman empire. If there is little to surprise here, there are some particularly wonderful examples of the Aphrodite from the art market and, in particular, 'one recently found in Northern Portugal, in the parish of Capela, Penafiel'.

While few will derive much profit from the text of this book, the illustrations provide a rather valuable teaching tool.

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Nicholas Rockwell. *Thebes: A History*. pp. xi + 177, b/w illustrations. 2017. London: Routledge Academic. ISBN 978-1-138-65833-2 hardback £105; e-publication £35.

This short overview of the history of Thebes between 1600 BC and AD 476 is part of the Routledge *Cities of the Ancient World* series, at present a scattergun collection of studies with Elis the only other mainland Greek community published to date. It is markedly shorter than other books in the series (149 pages of text compared to 239 pages for Elis), and the claims of the book to give an up to date assessment of all available information for the city over two millennia are very difficult to meet in this length.

The first two chapters (Mycenaean Thebes 1600-1200 BC; Dark Age and Renaissance Thebes 1200-700 BC) are varied in their focus, presenting the broader history of Minoan and Mycenaean Greece while segueing in and out of Theban material. This broader coverage is understandable to a degree in a work designed for a broad audience, but the archaeological information for Thebes in this period is sometimes difficult to easily discern, and more problematically, later myth is often invoked to enhance the presentation. Moreover, the differentiation is sometimes unclear, and the uneasy marriage this results in is encapsulated in the final sentence of the chapter on Mycenaean Thebes: 'The later legends enshrined in Greek literature may not be accurate historical accounts of Thebes in the Late Bronze Age, but they certainly help to give a sense of the great power and ultimate demise of

Mycenaean Thebes.' As Daniel Berman's[1] excellent work on Thebes has reinforced, it is impossible to understand later Thebes without thinking hard about Thebes in myth, but in this presentation of Bronze Age Thebes, the lines between history and literature are sometimes blurred unhelpfully rather than cross-fertilising productively.

The book has a more confident coverage of the Archaic and Classical periods (700-323 BC) which takes up four chapters and more than two thirds of the work. The main use of these sections is to provide a succinct, diachronic narrative though the history of the period and point to places where Theban activity overlaps with broader trends. Prioritising an uncomplicated presentation serves to reinforce the domination of the literary accounts of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Diodorus Siculus, following them closely and often with little or no scholarship cited to mediate the retelling. Only occasional episodes, such as Theban medism in the Persian-led invasion of 480-479 BC or the battle of Leuktra in 371 BC are given fuller critical treatment, and it is in such sections that the possibilities of the book are most apparent, with the reader being able to understand the experience of the city, the difficulties of the evidence, and why it all matters, in a succinctly composed package.

Chapter 7 'Hellenistic and Roman Thebes' is a run through of eight centuries of Theban history between 323 BC to AD 476 at such a rapid rate that most of the very great historical interest in this period is lost amidst the necessarily generalising and superficial presentation. This is followed by a two-page *Ancient Sources* section at the end of the work, which gives single paragraph descriptions of the principal literary sources cited, from Arrian to Xenophon, but without specific treatment to point to their relevance for Thebes. As there is no critical interaction with historical accounts from antiquity in the main body of the text, the purpose of this addition is not clear. Similarly, though the appended maps help the reader locate Thebes in mainland Greece, the region-specific maps are again focussed exclusively on the 5th and 4th centuries, and perversely there is no map or photograph that gives the reader any sense of Thebes as a city (two photographs of Thebes, taken from eye level and at some distance from the city, offer no assistance). Other problems include projecting the height of Lake Kopais to an absurdly high level, failing to take into account the productive work of Emeri Farinetti on the subject.[2]

The figures are well produced throughout, but poorly integrated, often with no reference or description in the main body of the text to the images that are shown, and images that would have been relevant in one place, inserted anachronistically with little attempt at integration. For instance, an inscribed bronze tablet published by Vassilios Aravantinos in 2014 and probably from the first half of the 5th century BC is given a good, clear half page image next to the discussion of the description of the early 4th century Boiotian constitution of the Oxyrhynchus historian, but is only mentioned in discussion as an aside in a footnote on the battle of Delion of 424 BC. Nowhere is its significance for the early 5th century BC discussed, and the contents of the inscription or the rationale for including it here are nowhere explained, the caption opaquely stating 'Votive offering of a Theban boeotarch'. Elsewhere, two similar photographs of Plataia viewed from the north are unintelligible without better explanation or labelling in the images. This problem is ubiquitous and is likely to leave the target audience too much to do to fill in the gaps, missing a real opportunity to bring the reader closer to the material evidence and modern sites.

Writing a book on Thebes is a difficult thing, with all the imbalances of evidence, the lacunose state of the evidence, and the historical interest of the non-specialist focussed traditionally around a very short period in the 4th century. It is undesirable to be over-critical of a project that tries to address a great need and has the potential to bring a fascinating city in contact with a wider audience, and to an extent this book satisfies that need in providing a narrative overview of the city. But the opportunities provided by the archaeological and epigraphic discoveries of the past few decades have not been taken. Indeed, Sarantis Symeonglou's 1985 work on Thebes seems to provide the basis for much of the archaeological presentation in the book; that the picture is in an energetic state of flux provided by ongoing work on the ground and a host of new finds is nowhere appreciable.

The prospective audience is also unclear: it is pitched too low for an undergraduate audience, and in hardback at least, priced far too high for a non-specialist reader, or indeed many libraries. At least one other book on the history of Thebes has already been commissioned for a wider audience, and without a revised edition in an affordable paperback, the book under review here is in danger of becoming quickly surpassed by others and missing a great opportunity. A longer version of this text, which admits more of the material evidence and literary culture, allows the reader to more

[1] Berman 2015.
[2] Farinetti 2008.

clearly appreciate the problems in the historical record (and also its rich diversity), and fulfils its stated desire to provide an up to date presentation of the city in terms of recent scholarship would be very welcome.

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