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Greek hero-cults is a topic that has fascinated scholars for more than a century and shows few signs of losing its appeal. Klaus-Frithjof Leonhardt's *Das Pelopion von Olympia* focuses on one of the most famous ancient hero-cults, that of Pelops, known from both the written record and his excavated cult place, the Pelopion, located in the centre of the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia. This slim volume takes on the large task to present the development and role of Greek hero-cults in antiquity, with particular focus on the Pelopion at Olympia. The study sets out to cover most major aspects of hero-cults previously treated by scholars and results in a very compressed overview. The book consists of a short introduction, a presentation of previous research, followed by two chapters on the Pelopion at Olympia and hero-cults in Archaic and Classical Greece, and ends with a summary. There is a bibliography of six pages and a list of the ancient sources used.

In the Introduction (pp. 9–11), the author presents the scope of the work, arguing for the importance of the cult of Pelops and the Pelopion for the understanding of Greek hero-cults at large. The second chapter (pp. 13–15) gives a short review of work at Olympia, tracing the history of the archaeological exploration from the late nineteenth century up to today. The third chapter focuses on the Pelopion (pp. 17–30), presenting the interesting development of the archaeology of the cult-place which was centered on an Early Bronze Age stone-clad tumulus, that came to be identified as the tomb of Pelops in the Archaic period. In the Classical period it was enclosed by a wall or a fence, and was entered through a formal propylon. The earlier excavators' interpretations of the layout and chronology of the Pelopion are outlined, but the bulk of Leonhardt's account is based on Helmut Kyrieleis' excellent publication (2006) of the recent excavations in this part of the Altis, *Anfänge und Frühzeit des Heiligtums von Olympia. Die Ausgrabungen am Pelopion 1987–1999*, which has provided an entirely new understanding of the sanctuary, particularly in the Early Iron Age phase. The chapter also touches upon the mythic background of Pelops and the reasons behind the institution of the cult, namely the desire of the polis of Elis to strengthen their control of the sanctuary of Zeus.

The fourth chapter (pp. 31–48) concerns the role and function of hero-cults in Archaic Greece, addressing three substantial topics, all of which have been explored in depth by previous scholars. The first regards the changes the term ›hero‹ underwent from its first possible occurrence in the Linear B

tablets, through Homer and Hesiod and into the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Here, the author also presents some of the hero typologies proposed by scholars in order to grasp the complexity and variations of hero-cults and their role in Greek religion and society. Secondly, the cult practices, sacrificial rituals and cult places for heroes are outlined, as well as the relation between hero-cults, the worship of the gods and the cult of the dead. Finally, the author traces the development and function of Greek hero-cults from the Early Iron Age to the Hellenistic period, pointing out the change from the warrior heroes of Homeric times to the cult and functional heroes in the Classical period, more closely linked to the contemporary social and political setting. Chapter V (pp. 49–53) offers a summary of the evidence and arguments presented.

The book is almost exclusively a summary of other scholars' previous research. Leonhardt does not provide any independent evaluation of the ancient evidence, written or material, nor of the results of scholarly work on hero-cults in general and Pelops and the Pelopion in particular. His own contribution consists of the introduction of the concept »Ehren-Heros« (p. 10), used to characterize the function of heroes in the Hellenistic period, and the suggestion that hero-cults in the Archaic period were instrumental in establishing models of aesthetics and behaviour that had an impact on the development of Greek culture and art.

Large and complex research fields such as hero-cults can be summarized; this is evident in contributions to the many handbooks on various ancient themes, which have recently been published, including on Greek religion. However, for such an endeavour to be successful, the author needs to have a comprehensive grasp of both the ancient sources and previous publications, which unfortunately is not the case with Leonhardt's book. A general problem is that the scholarship referred to in many instances represents contradictory points of views, which the author has compressed into a single account. A reader not familiar with the ancient evidence of Greek hero-cults and the modern scholarly debate on the topic has no means of knowing this. One example of this problem is the presentation of ritual practices within hero-cults (pp. 38–39), where Leonhardt picks information from different scholars who occupy opposing and partly incompatible positions in the debate, a fact, not at all visible in the text. An overview naturally has to simplify and generalize, still an author basing his account to such a large degree on the work of others, instead of providing his own analysis, needs to be aware of and present the different positions of the scholarship referred to, or the reader will be served description, which does not reflect current work on the topic.

The book also demonstrates an insufficient knowledge of Greek archaeology, including the site of Olympia, leading to mistakes or misinterpretations that the author could have avoided by a more thorough consultation of the archaeological publications and the relevant scholarly literature. One of the many fascinating aspects of this major sanctuary is the fact that the huge ash-altar of Zeus, described by Pausanias as rising to more than six meters in height, has left no traces in the archaeological record. On page 20, Leonhardt states that slight remains exist of this altar, referring to a plan (fig. 14) where some curved walls are marked »Zeus-Altar«, as well as to Kyrieleis' 2006 publication of new investigations in the Pelopion. However, the plan is from the publication of the »alte Grabung« (1875–1881), and the structure that the early excavators interpreted as remains of the altar of Zeus have subsequently been identified as the foundations of an Early Iron Age house (Haus VII) which has no connection to the altar. Furthermore, Kyrieleis (op. cit. 50) explicitly states in his publication of the new excavations at the Pelopion that no identifiable remains are preserved of the great ash-altar of Zeus.

There are other unfortunate slips of this kind, such as the statement that the Classical Pelopion could have been enclosed by »Quader- oder Ziegelsteinmauern« (p. 50). »Ziegelstein« suggests a brick wall, which would be highly unusual for the Classical period. If built of brick and not of stone, the enclosure would rather have been constructed of mud brick, that is »Lehmziegel«. The famous Early Iron Age heroon at Lefkandi is said to have been raised to be the focus of a cult of the dead or as a hero-cult (p. 41). The author is not alone in assuming that there was a hero-cult at Lefkandi, but such an interpretation is methodologically incorrect, considering the fact there is no evidence of a cult at the tumulus, but only of later burials around its base. The designation of Lefkandi as a »heroon« is partly a misnomer and reflects the grand scale of the burial and the extravagant burial gifts rather than any actual hero-cult. The sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi is listed as an extramural one (p. 21), which is not the case, since it was surrounded by the ancient city of Delphi. Twice (pp. 40 s. and 51), the author speaks of the arriving Greeks (die griechischen Zuwanderer) who, confronted with the enigmatic and distant Mycenaean remains after the Dark Ages tried to connect to the heroic past through hero-cults. This statement seems to assume that the Greek arrived after the end of the Bronze Age, which is odd, since scholars today generally agree that Greeks had been present on the mainland throughout the Late Bronze Age and that the Mycenaeans spoke Greek due to the Linear B tablets written in that language.

The text lacks depth and reflection and is sometimes marred by sweeping claims, which can be illustrated by some concrete examples. The detailed outline (p. 35 s.) of Lewis Farnell's seven categories of heroes (Greek hero cult and ideas of immortality [Oxford 1921]) is unnecessary, since nowadays it is the history of scholarship rather than a research tool in use. Other categorisations are mentioned, such as those of Angelo Brelich (*Gli eroi greci. Un problema storico-religioso* [Rome 1958]) and Emily Kearns (*The heroes of Attica* [London 1989]), but there is no attempt to discuss to what extent such typologies were relevant in antiquity or if they are useful for the exploration of hero-cults, at all. Although the importance of the Pelopion in the study of Greek heroes is indisputable, it is odd that there is no mention of the Menelaion at Sparta, a major hero-cult pre-dating the cult of Pelops. The acceptance of Mangold's statement that cult places for gods and heroes hardly differed as to size, location and installations (pp. 39 and 51) is surprising, considering the dominance of temples in sanctuaries of gods in comparison to their rarity at hero-cult places, and the fact that several hero-cult shrines have a unique architecture and ground plan.

The assertion that the Pelopion should be considered a paradigmatic example of the development of Greek hero-cults (p. 49) disregards a fundamental characteristic of such cults and cult-places, namely their heterogeneity and diversity as to layout, mythic background and cultic context. The statement that Greek hero-cults arose from the cult of the dead (pp. 37 and 39) is not an uncontroversial position accepted by all scholars. On the very last page (p. 53), the author presents his own proposal that the Greek hero-cults established an aristocratic model of aesthetics and ethics, which affected the development of the entire Greek culture and art. This far-reaching claim is difficult to reconcile with the numerous local and sometimes even anonymous hero-cults known from inscriptions. Such a view of hero-cults seems to miss the highly localized and varied character of Greek heroes, and it is problematic how local heroes such as the heros Klaiokophoros (The holder of the temple keys), the Hero of the Salt Marches, or heroes being babies would fit into this picture.

There are also some inaccuracies. The assertion that theoxenia was a ritual that distinguished hero-cults from the cult of gods (p. 51) is incorrect, as this kind of sacrifice was just as common in the worship of gods, as shown by Michael Jameson's seminal study of the topic (in: R. Hägg [ed.], *Ancient Greek cult practice from the epigraphical evidence* [Stockholm 1994] 35–57, not included in the bibliography). Moreover, the term theoxenia is plural and cannot be declined as theoxeniai

(p. 38). The Greek term themenos is consistently misspelled as tenemos (p. 17, 23, 40, 42 and 50).

The book is illustrated with twenty-four figures at the end, which are a useful complement, but some photos are blurred and of inferior quality (especially figs. 2, 5, 9, 18 and 24). A few have been edited in an odd way. Fig. 6, which shows the inscribed sherd from the Pelopion bearing a dedication to Pelops, one of the main pieces of evidence for the identification of the cult-place, is cropped so that the left part of the original photo with the beginning of the name is not visible. The same goes for fig. 12, a Submycenaean kylix from the Black layer, which only shows the middle section of this vessel. All figures are taken from other publications, though not necessarily the original ones, and in some instances the captions from the previous publications are included (fig. 1, 3, 6, 10, 16 and 21), which is confusing.

A survey of this limited scope has to leave many publications aside, but sometimes the omissions become problematic, especially when older scholarship in German is referred to rather than more recent work in other languages. The so-called pillar of Oinomaos and the early stadium (p. 26) is explored by Eric Brulotte in 'The pillar of Oinomaos and the location of stadium I at Olympia' (*Am. Journal Arch.* 98, 1994, pp. 53–64), and for the heroization of living persons (p. 33 and 43) Bruno Currie's important study 'Pindar and the cult of heroes' (Oxford 2015) could have been taken into account more fully. The use of the term heros on grave stones in the Hellenistic period has also been studied more extensively than what appears in the text (pp. 34 s.), see for example, Dennis D. Hughes' article on 'Hero cults, heroic honours, heroic dead' (in: R. Hägg [ed.], *Ancient Greek hero cult* [Stockholm 1999] 167–175), Pierre Fröhlich's 'Funéraires publiques et tombeaux monumentaux intra-muros dans les cites grecques à l'époque hellénistique' (in: M.-C. Ferrières / Maria P. Castiglioni / F. Létoublon [ed.], *Forgerons, élites et voyageurs d'Homère à non jours* [Grenoble 2013] 227–309), and Andrzej Wypustek's 'Images of eternal beauty in funerary verse inscriptions of the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods' (Leiden 2013). The bibliography contains several typos (transformation instead of transformations; 213 instead of 2013; Osborne instead of Osborne). In some entries, random pages are listed, although the entry is a monograph. There is a mix-up between the journal *Kernos* and its supplements (Ekroth 2002). For some articles in joint volumes, no pages are given.

Greek hero-cults is a large and diverse topic, both as to the extant ancient evidence and the scholarship it has engendered. One major difficulty with this book is its brevity and the desire to

cover too many complex aspects of hero-cults, but the main weakness is that the author demonstrates an insufficient understanding of Greek hero-cults and of Greek religion. In the end, it is difficult to see for which audience a work like this is intended. The book is too much of a simplified and partly outdated overview to be useful for scholars working on Greek religion, and also too inexact and uncritical to be of value for students who are not familiar with the ancient evidence and the modern publications.

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