
D. Graham J. Shipley, *The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese. Politics, Economies, and Networks 338–197 BC*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2018, 384 S., ISBN 978-0-521-87369-7 (geb.), £ 90,–

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S(hipley) offers us a valuable and much-needed new analysis of the early Hellenistic Peloponnese, synthesising all available evidence (literature, epigraphy, numismatics and archaeology) for the peninsula into a systematic re-evaluation of its political and economic condition. He revises the old view of the Peloponnese as a backward and declining region in the Hellenistic period, pointing instead to trends of continuity, localism and diversity, and an active and thriving community of myriad civic centres guided by elite patronage. The *polis* emerges as the most important agent in political decision-making and economic development, a conclusion which reinforces the refutations of *polis* decline in this era. The Macedonian kings are no longer strictly oppressors of the Peloponnese and while their presence and interest in maintaining control over the region cannot be denied, it is shown that their domination was never systematic, continuous or evenly spread, and that they did not ever intend to build a new imperial order in the peninsula. Their policies were hampered by geographical and geopolitical conditions, and were generally uninterested in political ideology. Moreover working with the local elites (‘delegation from a distance’) rather than against them quickly proved more profitable and beneficial to Macedonian rulers who sought to secure the peninsula against rivals or sedition while focusing on conquest or their northern borders. Garrisons were sporadic, difficult to discern, and seem to peter out in the mid-third century. ‘Tyrants’ tended to be civic governors who emerged from the local elite and were not necessarily forced on the city, violent, or installed by the Macedonian kings (perhaps resembling Roman *dictatores*; 122), although they were often associated with Macedonian ‘support’.

While the looming presence of Sparta and the Achaian League cannot be ignored in the development of the Peloponnese in this period, S. has distributed attention as much as possible to all areas of the Peloponnese, to the different *poleis*, culture regions, networks, and trading routes. His interest is in exploring the overall functioning of the Peloponnese, its political, geographical and economic condition, and connectivity rather than revisiting Spartan or Achaian domination. In this, he warns strongly against the dangers of homogenization and the use of modern terminology and thinking (particularly the concepts of ‘revolution’ and ‘growth’) in assessing the political and economic state, while at

the same time disproving the peninsula's isolation and in arguing that it is only after Rome takes over that things begin to change.

Unfortunately, due to the closeness of publication, S. was unable to engage more fully with Kralli's 2017 volume on the interstate relations of the Hellenistic Peloponnese (xxiii; I. Kralli, *The Hellenistic Peloponnese. Interstate Relations. A Narrative and Analytic History, 371–146 BC*, Swansea 2017). This was also the case for A. Bresson, *The Making of the Ancient Greek Economy. Institutions, Markets, and Growth in the City-States*, Princeton – Oxford 2016). Yet, Kralli's and S.'s works complement each other exceptionally well and should be seen as filling a need for new investigations of the Peloponnese which take a broader and more comprehensive approach to the region and which move beyond the Spartan or Achaean centric analyses of much past work. Despite both titles proclaiming their focus on the 'Hellenistic' Peloponnese, both works equally question the usefulness of traditional periodic boundaries by documenting and exploring changes across an extended timeline. Kralli aimed to clarify the "Peloponnesian tangle" (cf. E. S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, 1986, 120) and offers a chronological investigation of interstate relations that stretches from the battle of Leuktra in 371 down to 146 BC and the sack of Corinth. S. pushes us to see the developments of the Peloponnese from a more thematic perspective (politics, economy, networks) and focuses on the period in which the Macedonian kings have a significant presence in Peloponnesian affairs. He thereby extends the chronological focus back even further, primarily from the battle of Chaironeia in 338 but at times moving even earlier to the Peloponnesian war and Peloponnesian League in the fifth century in outlining the political background and narrative (Chapter 2). The analysis concludes in the year 197 which represents the end of Macedonian authority over the peninsula following defeat by Rome. The volume is, therefore, structured around a more concrete phase of development than the usual arbitrary 'early Hellenistic' period and allows us to see that while the Macedonians allowed for continuity and extended the 'golden age' of *polis* politics, it was in the Roman period that things really started to change.

Chapter 1, "The Acropolis of Greece" (1–28), introduces S.'s task, sets out in detail the historical geography of the Peloponnese, and emphasises the importance of regions (Argolis, Korinthia-Sikyonia, Achaia, Eleia, Triphylia, Arkadia, Messenia and Laconia; 15–27). Few surveys of this nature have been provided in previous scholarship and it stands as an essential foundation for understanding the processes and conditions of influence and change in the rest of the work. Chapter 2, "Warfare and Control" (29–91), then outlines the political narrative of the Peloponnese from the fifth century and Spartan domination to the end of Macedonian influence on the peninsula in 197 BC, exploring power relations,

distribution and strategies of control and influence. Chapter 3, “Power and Politics” (92–158), then begins the reassessment of *polis* societies, garrisons, ‘tyrants’, Macedonian power, stasis and political continuities. Of particular note is this chapter’s collection of evidence and information for all the various tyrants and tyrannies in the region (97–115), the preferences of the various *poleis* for oligarchic or democratic regimes and their changes of constitution over time (128–146), as well as S.’s argument for the relative unimportance of political ideology in the pursuit of regime change by the Macedonians and the local elite (146–154).

S. then tackles the difficult but rewarding topic of the Peloponnesian economy in Chapter 4, “Economies and Landscapes” (159–242). As S. openly states, much of our evidence is inadequate for the production of a detailed understanding of the peninsula’s economic condition, yet he is still able to produce the first synthesis of rural survey data (183–199), epigraphic and built landscapes (199–214), material culture (ceramic and non-ceramic records; 215–224), coin production and monetization (224–238). From this preliminary analysis, he is able to conclude that there was in fact economic and demographic stability in the Peloponnese, even advancement in some places, rather than decline in the early Hellenistic period. The impact of royal policy and conflict on the economic condition of the Peloponnese was, moreover, limited and any negative consequences were usually temporary. The final chapter, “Region, Network, and Polis” (243–294) then explores the relationship between region and *polis*, the stability of the peninsula, and its connectivity. After outlining the limitations of and on Macedonian policy, S. considers the Peloponnese in terms of regions (254–264), their geopolitical makeup and unity, communication and trade networks, and centralisation. The limits of regional specificity are openly acknowledged, however, and the prominence of the *poleis* as individual agents in the wider context of the Peloponnese concludes the analysis of the work (270–293). Attention is drawn to the communication, trade routes and roads between the *poleis*, the degree of their connectivity, the changes in the landscapes of *poleis* over time, and their persistence and permeability.

The volume concludes with a comprehensive list of Works Cited (295–338), Index Locorum (339–343) and General Index (344–355). The presentation of this volume is also of a high-quality with clean and crisp text, decently sized font and spacing, and multiple clear and useful maps and tables throughout.

Overall, this is a work of exceptional quality which will be helpful for both scholars and students alike working on the history of the ancient Peloponnese. It pushes forward the boundaries of our knowledge of this often-overlooked peninsula through its competent handling and integration of evidence into one cohesive analysis, while also contributing to the study of ancient political thought and practice, of ancient economies and of connectivity. “The Early Hellenistic Pello-

ponnese” will, no doubt, become a key text in the field and create the foundation for further studies in the future.