

stone (l. 128). Many of the hydriai are acknowledged to be permeated by a 'gusto umoristico' (241) but the humour of the monkeys shown in nos. 10 and 20 is missed, the first half-collapsing as it points towards the scene with Atalanta, the second masturbating while screened by foliage from the encounter with Nessos. The *mêtis* argument is worked very hard for the Herakles and Hydra scene of no. 23, which is framed by Iolaos' curved *harpê* and the crab's sideways movement to show some kind of significant exegetic symmetry. *Mêtis* again is displayed by the oblique undulating movement of the seal and by the colour-changing capabilities of the polyp who figure in no. 29. B. runs through the visual parallels for the exceptional sea monster (*kêtos*) of this same frieze, including the Corinthian scene with Perseus hurling rocks, where the huge protome (135) is surely boar-like rather than leonine. It would have been worth mentioning the recent idea that some of these monstrous representations may have been inspired by contemporary discoveries of fossils of large extinct species (Mayor, *First Fossil Hunters* (2000) 163-4). The scene on no. 30 (one of the very few archaic pots to attempt to follow the text of Homer closely) is interpreted not as the embassy to Achilles of *Iliad* 9,168-70 but as the later mission of 19, 239 ff. The argument hinges on the figure facing Nestor (captioned), who is identified as Briseis rather than Phoenix, thus solving one problem (the figure doesn't look old, and the gender is uncertain) only to create another (why are Odios and Ajax intruding here?). The Nubian guards on the famous Busiris hydria (no. 34) are claimed to be carrying hunting sticks (*lagobola*), so chiming with the boar hunt on the lower frieze; but again the added humour is missed. The *lagobolon* is for hunting small animals such as hares, and as a weapon against the likes of Herakles is a complete non-starter. Elsewhere the Caeretan workshop has fun depicting heroes themselves fighting with inappropriate or miniscule armoury – unless the subtext is that big heroes do not require big or useful weapons: Herakles tackles the Hydra with a puny club, the *kêtos* with a tiny *harpê*, and there are small clubs again for Atalanta and her companions to confront the Calydonian boar.

Although I am not convinced in all particulars, the book deserves and demands careful reading. There are many pertinent comments on animal symbolism, though it would have been worth stressing that below the vertical handle of the hydriai there is a liking for a large palmette which intrudes into the frieze area, and to put an animal either side of it, often in heraldic fashion, is an obvious compositional expedient. It is a pity that no mention is made of an additional fragmentary hydria in Munich featuring Atalanta (Hamdorf, *MüJb* 43 (1992) 194-5), nor of two hydriai in New York (Hemelrijk, *Greek Vases in the Getty Mus.* 6 (2000) 87-158), one of them showing Odysseus' escape from the Cyclops' cave.

TOM RASMUSSEN

University of Manchester

tom.rasmussen@manchester.ac.uk

ISLER (H.-P.) **Eretria XVIII. Das Theater: Grabungen 1997 und 1998.** Lausanne: Ecole suisse d'archéologie en Grèce Infolio editions, 2007. Pp. 174, illus., plans. Sw.fr.75/€50. 9872884744089.

The theatre in Eretria has been the subject of intermittent archaeological study and excavation for over a hundred years. In between, unfortunately, it has been the subject of neglect and theft. For example (p.20 without comment) the unique evidence interpreted as an eccyclema basis in the central thyroma by the earlier American excavators, has long since disappeared. Yet as Fiechter pointed out in his detailed study of 1937, Eretria is noteworthy precisely because the foundations of a pre-Hellenistic skênê – perhaps built soon after 340 on an earlier site – are preserved under the later reconstruction; its upper part had been of mudbrick. This was the result of lowering the orchestra by over 3 metres c. 300, and shifting it and the new higher skênê forward, so that the basis of the old skênê with its paraskênia was integrated into the back of the new one. Fiechter's detailed reconstruction of the development could not meet with total approval, (esp. von Gerkan, *Gnomon* 17 (1941) 115-20) and anyone attempting to understand Frank Sear's summary in *Roman Theatres* (Oxford 2006) 398 or the older *Führer durch Eretria* will find minor variants from what is given in this book.

Isler sets out a conservative study of what we can know from the new excavations and his detailed *Bestandaufnahme* with a huge pull-out plan must now be fundamental. The book starts with very useful coverage of the history of the excavation (1-20), and a summary of what can be concluded, especially regarding the three clear stages of development and their dating. Pages 21-2 deal with the new plan, and conclude that a foot of 0.30 m was probably used in the second phase. This is followed by details of the new excavations, and the conclusions (51-2). E. Ferroni provides technical details of the dig and a catalogue of the finds (55-77). The pictures are very detailed, including some by Dörpfeld in 1891 from the U.S. excavation, which was never fully published.

The main contribution here is the precise plan and dating of the three phases. The main problem seems to be not the first or the third final construction, but the major intermediate modernization c. 300 BC with new stage front, constructed when the skênê was heightened to the usual two stories, the orchestra lowered, a proskênion constructed before a new retaining wall, and Charonian steps built. The three frontal doors of the old stage become preserved at the upper level of the new, but well behind the facade. The final typical Hellenistic form is the result of a major overhaul after 150 BC perhaps necessitated by Roman damage, whereby the entire front wall of the skênê had to be replaced.

Part of this first innovation was a shifting of the auditorium into the hill to the south in front of the old skênê, using the earth excavated from the orchestra to heap up a mound to take a new higher, round koilon. It

is the sadly deteriorated koilon that looms large in the present volume: the koilon was greater than the often-cited 25 rows, divided in 12 kerkides (17), with no diazoma. The stone seats have three different profiles, sometimes in the same row, as a result of repairs. Remains of two prohedria chairs survive. The reader is specifically referred to Fiechter and von Gerkan's review for further details of the theatre. This is a little puzzling. A comparison of the three reconstructed ground plans here (174), with the two phases illustrated in Schefold-Auberson, *Evetria, Archaologikos Hodegos* (1973) 66-7, shows several discrepancies; e.g. (18) there is indeed no evidence for the pillars fronting the earliest proskênion as illustrated by Schefold, and so *Flügelbauten* are properly late classical paraskênia.

No reconstructions save of ground plans are offered. The reader is left unclear about the actual playing area on the upper level of the Hellenistic theatre. Was it 2 m deep, i.e. the same as the (wooden) roof of the proskênion, as we might expect, or unusually 6 m. – the distance back to the 6 thyromata pillars known from phase 3? Puzzles remain.

WILLIAM J. SLATER  
McMaster University  
slaterw@mcmaster.ca

**MELFI (M.) Il santuario di Asclepio a Lebena.**

(Monografie della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in Oriente 19). Athens: Scuola archeologica italiana di Atene, 2007. Pp. 246, illus. €60. 9789608740587.

The sanctuary of Asclepius at Lebena on Crete was excavated during three summer weeks in 1900, with a second campaign of a few days in 1910. Excavators found a temple, a stoa complex, and a curious building containing a subterranean chamber along with an inscription mentioning a *thesauros* or treasury. Lebena's extensive epigraphic finds, including decrees, sacred laws, dedications and many cure inscriptions were published by Guarducci in *IC I.18*, but the architectural remains received only preliminary notices, almost all excavation notebooks and associated finds were lost, and information on this very interesting site has been extremely difficult to piece together until now.

Melfi uses archival documents and many unpublished photographs preserved by SAIA, combining them with new aerial photography and topographical survey to produce site plans and analyse the construction phases of the preserved buildings. M. does an immense service by coordinating and publishing this material, and acknowledges her debt not only to the surveyors, cartographers and epigraphists who shared their work with her, but also to SAIA which supported her project. M. squeezes every drop of information from the archival sources and topographical survey, not only for the history of Crete, but for clues as to how healing sanctuaries developed in the fourth century BC, flour-

ished during the Hellenistic period, and then exploded in popularity with the advent of the tourist phenomenon in the Roman era.

M. organizes the volume into three parts: archival and archaeological survey, synthetic discussions of the administrative history of the sanctuary, and appendices of epigraphic and literary references. She attempts to draw on all material in her discussion, but is restricted by the nature of the evidence. Sanctuary administration, for example, must be discussed primarily from epigraphic evidence, although the newly secure dating of the architecture would also support her analysis. M.'s discussion of the historical development of the cult, however, is most successful, integrating the building phases with other available evidence. Highlights of this method include her discussion and dating of the *thesauros* chamber to the first architectural phase in the mid third century BC (50-4). Also M. points out that extensive Roman renovations to the sanctuary respected the cult of the Hellenistic period by re-installing the older decrees and cure inscriptions (82-4). Such care, she suggests may reflect a desire to restore and preserve the cult ritual of the early sanctuary (152). This is an attractive hypothesis, and it will be interesting to see if similar results can be detected at other renovated sanctuaries.

The epigraphic appendix is very useful and includes two small fragments not published in *IC I.18*. Location and inventory numbers are provided when available, as well as bibliography, translation and historical commentary. M.'s carefully prepared entries reveal that, sadly, of 52 catalogued inscriptions, only 27 can still be accounted for today. The other 25, primarily small fragments, disappeared early in the last century. Maps, plans and photographs are generously provided and all clearly reproduced, which is an enormous gift, considering the age and photo quality of most previous literature on Lebena. M. also includes a transcription of a unique topographical analysis by Antonio Taramelli written in 1894 before excavation. Of course, we would wish to have the excavation notebooks and the pottery finds from those excavations, but now we have everything that actually survives properly published and available, used in conjunction with careful modern survey.

This study of Lebena has led M. to expand her research into the development of Asclepius cults generally. That monograph is now in press. To judge by her emphasis on contextualization and historical analysis in the Lebena volume, M's next book should differ from and complement J. Riethmüller's two volume survey, *Asklepios: Heiligtümer und Kulte* (2005). This reviewer is looking forward to learning as much from the new work as she learned from this.

ISABELLE PAFFORD  
San Francisco State University  
ipafford@sfsu.edu