

MASSIMO FRASCA, *Leontinoi. Archeologia di una colonia greca*. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 2009. XVIII+182 pp., 28 figs, 23 pls; 24 cm (Archaeologica 152). – ISSN 0391-9293. ISBN 978-88-7689-239-4.

This book tells all there is to know and gives all literature up to 2009 about the Greek colony of Leontinoi on Sicily, founded by settlers from Euboian Chalkis. Leontinoi and the other Chalcidians in Naxos and Katanè owed their wealth to the possession of the plain of Catania (400 km<sup>2</sup>) with its cereals, viticulture, horse-breeding (the local elite of archaic Leontinoi was formed by *hippeis*), fishery in rivers and sea, and sheeps' wool and cheese. Schubring, in 1874, was the first to identify the site of Leontinoi with the help of its description in Polybius: south of the modern city of Lentini, on the hills of S. Mauro and Metapiccola. Paolo Orsi, who else, was the first to excavate: Sikel cemeteries in 1899, Greek fortifications in 1930. Its site was inhabited before the Greeks came. The settlement on S. Mauro hill shows uninterrupted use from the Castelluccio phase at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC up to the Iron Age and the arrival of the Greek colonists. The vicinity of other centres dated like S. Mauro suggests that it was no exception. In Thucydides' account of the Greek colonisation (VI,3,3), the indigenous population of the region of Leontinoi was forcibly removed immediately, but Polyainos says that the two groups coexisted peaceably at first, up to the arrival of Megarians in the city. For the indigenous settlement on Metapiccola hill, with its seven excavated huts, it is not clear whether it still stood as the Greeks arrived. Cemeteries in the flanks of the same hill, though, do have indigenous Finocchito phase (730-690 or 650) graves with pottery of Greek production or inspiration. Mainland Ausonian influences seem to be present.

The oldest Greek graves are missing and were probably destroyed by later fortifications. We get a tantalising glimpse of a destroyed elite grave in a bronze *deimos* with rams' heads from Leontinoi, now in Berlin. Between 728 and 495 BC, Leontinoi remained the city of the colonists from Chalkis. Little is known about the tyrant Panaitios, who took power in Leontinoi 615 or 609 BC. He might have founded the subcolony of Euboa, short-lived according to ancient authors, which has been identified by the author with Monte S. Mauro on the western edge of the plain of Catania: a really Greek city with laws on bronze tablets existed there, supplanting an indigenous settlement, from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC up to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Hippokrates of Gela's conquest of east Sicily in 495 BC puts an end to the most glorious days of Leontinoi. The 5<sup>th</sup> century was troubled, between Syracuse and Athens, with a rapid succession of blows with which Syracuse, restructuring entire east Sicily, took its autonomy away. In 476, all Chalcidian inhabitants of Naxos and Katanè were settled in Leontinoi. In 433, the city renewed an alliance with Athens; elite and populace fell out; it has been suggested that Leontinoi played a role in the disastrous Athenian invasion of 415. In 406, it is a fortified city with a heterogeneous population. After two more years of independence, it surrendered to Dionysios during a siege and the entire population

was settled in Syracuse. Between 403 and 214 BC Leontinoi was a city of the mercenaries. With 10,000 mercenaries settled in Leontinoi, it becomes one of the fortresses defending Syracusan territory. It then follows the vicissitudes of that city. In 338, after the death of its leader Hiketas, the walls are again demolished and the population is settled in Syracuse. The city is again populated with mercenaries. Then follows the time of the struggle between Carthage and Rome; from a treaty with Rome in 263 until 215 a long period of peace and prosperity follows. Marcellus conquered the city in 214. After that, it declined; during the Sicilian Slave Wars, its territory was confiscated, but it still thrived on the fertility of the plain. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Pausanias saw with his own eyes that it was inhabited again. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, it had a large Jewish community and Christian martyrs, and by the sixth it was a fortified place around religious buildings.

Every chapter discusses its subject in historical and archaeological detail and ends with a handy synthesis. A few examples: the nature of two sanctuaries and the intricacies of the fortifications are treated thoroughly. In her preface, Paola Pelagatti, former Superintendent of Antiquities of East Sicily, stresses the importance of this study: it will help the survival and future studies of the site of Leontinoi, it passionately tells the life of the ancient city, it is written by a student qualified by earlier studies of indigenous cemeteries nearby, such as Monte Finocchito and Monte Casasia, and of the archaic Greek settlement of Monte San Mauro near Caltagirone, which he convincingly identified with the sub-colony Euboa. In his presentation, Mario Torelli puts the present study in the perspective of those of the great cities of ancient Italy and points out that many important sites are still awaiting the presentation of their complete history and archaeology, such as Frasca's study presents in a prudent way for the Chalcidian colony of Leontinoi. The author, who took part in many excavations of the University of Catania on the site, sets himself a modest goal in his introduction: to reconstruct in great lines the archaeological history of Leontinoi, without pretending to solve all outstanding questions.

The final section of the last chapter is dedicated to the route the visitor might follow on the site, to praise of the local museum, to lamentation of the incroachment of buildings on the archaeological terrain, and to hopes for a long awaited Archaeological Park of Lentini, with all the possibilities of research and restoration.

Two criticism on maps must be made. The reader's understanding of Leontinoi's exact sphere of influence would have been greatly helped if the map of Fig. 12 had given all geographical names mentioned in the text. A similar remark must be made on the network of roads from Leontinoi: it is described in detail; a map is alas not given.

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ELENA CALANDRA, *The Ephemeral and the Eternal: The Pavilion of Ptolemy Philadelphos in the Court of Alexandria*. Translated by S.A. Burgess. Athens: Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, 2011. 191 pp., 28 figs; 24.5 cm (Tripodes: Quaderni della

Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene 13). – ISBN 978-960-98397-8-5.

Elena Calandra's study of Ptolemy II's renowned banqueting pavilion is a welcome addition to a growing body of literature concerned with court culture and palatial architecture in the Hellenistic empires. The pavilion (*skēnē*) was erected in the palace gardens of Alexandria for the occasion of the first celebration of the Ptolemaia Festival, which took place at an uncertain date somewhere between 280 and 260 BCE (Calandra favors 279/278 BCE). It was described in rich detail in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE in the book *On Alexandria* by Kallixeinos of Rhodes, who probably drew upon an illustrated account of the festival commissioned by the court to keep the memory of this ephemeral event alive. Fragments of *On Alexandria*, including this famous *ekphrasis*, have survived in Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai* (Ath. 196a-197c = Kallixeinos *FHG* III 58). The huge, temporary structure, which could hold 130 couches, was entirely covered with a canopy resting on huge wooden pillars. It was richly decorated with expensive purple dye, 'Persian' carpets, the pelts of exotic animals, painted panels, marble statues, and beautifully elaborated military equipment. The gold tableware, meant to be distributed as *symbolon* gifts among the king's guests at the end of the feasting, had a total worth of more than 10,000 talents. The ritual feasting in the pavilion took place in between the procession (*pompē*) and the games (*agōnes*) that were part of the festival, too. Although the pavilion merits analysis in its own right, Calandra rightly emphasizes the influence of Ptolemaic court culture on Roman architectural design for the public representation of power, drawing parallels particularly between Ptolemy II's pavilion and the architecture of the basilica.

The volume under review was translated from the Italian by S. A. Burgess. It has two parts. Part one provides an historical context for the banqueting pavilion, discussing the source tradition, the pavilion's architectural antecedents, and the banquet's place in Ptolemaic court culture. The second part is devoted to the reconstruction of the pavilion. After reviewing various earlier attempts (pp. 65-94), Calandra offers her own proposal for reconstructing the pavilion (95-118), and analyzes at some length the decorations, furnishings, and tableware that Kallixeinos describes (119-130).

Although acknowledging possible Egyptian and Achaemenid influences, Calandra rightfully points to Greek and Macedonian models as the principal antecedents of the pavilion's design and the banqueting that took place in it (although it is questionable whether contemporaneous observers will have looked at the pavilion with such rigid cultural classifications in mind). The ideological origins of the pavilion as a locus for monarchical representation is traced back to the tents of Alexander, which in turn were modeled on Persian examples. Interestingly, Calandra emphasizes the religious backdrop to the architecture of the pavilion, which was constructed after all for ritual feasting in the context of the Ptolemaia Festival, with its manifest Dionysian imagery: 'the *skēnē* (sic) had, above all, a sacred function ... which means that we must begin

our analysis from a religious perspective' (p. 49). It is somewhat disappointing that Calandra does not really pursue this point, fatally undermining in the conclusion her own promising observation with an essentially a-historical, zero-sum distinction between sacred and profane, as she presumes without further argumentation that the procession and the banquet had moved away from a 'strictly religious' (139) to a 'socio-political' sphere (10, cf. 45-48). Neither does she elaborate on the probable connection between Ptolemaic ideology and the cosmological symbolism of the pavilion that she notes on pp. 51-52, and the blatant royal and imperial iconography displayed by means of the 'works of art' exhibited in the *skēnē*. The book would have benefited from the use of literature concerned with religious festivals and imperial ideology. Court ceremonial, too, is a subject that could have merited a more focused treatment: Calandra assumes that the banqueters were royal *philoí* who were already at court (and includes the legendary seventy wise men who created the *Septuaginta*, p. 42); but the fact that the pavilion was a temporary structure constructed for the occasion of a big festival distinctly points towards the presence of guests from outside Alexandria, particularly the Aegean world (though they, too, could have had the status of *philos*).

This said, there is much to commend the archaeological second part, 'A proposed reconstruction'. This is the strongest section of the book. Kallixeinos' description of the physical appearance of the *skēnē* has induced varying reconstructions, particularly in the 1910s and 1980s, by among others Leroux (1913), Studniczka (1914), Tomlison (1984), Winter/Christie (1985), and Salza Prina Ricotti (1989). Calandra critically reviews these and other treatments. Where possible, discussion of the various reconstructions is accompanied by the original images of the respective proposals. All of these one way or other work from the detailed study by Studniczka from 1914 - whose line drawings of the pavilion are still the most widely known - as does Calandra herself (paragraph A.1.1, at pp. 92-94: 'Returning to Studniczka'). In the past century, Studniczka influential proposal has been both the 'binding starting point' and a 'hindrance to the development of reconstructive hypotheses' (27). With Calandra's detailed new reconstruction, this barrier has now been overcome.

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