

BOOK REVIEW

Greek City Walls of the Archaic Period, 900–480 BC. By Rune FREDERIKSEN. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xxx + 238. Hardcover, £100.00/\$170.00. ISBN 978-0-19-957812-2.

The archaeology of Early Iron Age (EIA, 900–700 BCE) and archaic (700–480 BCE) fortification walls is a relatively obscure subject, yet as Rune Frederiksen demonstrates, it deserves much more of our attention. Frederiksen's book derives from a dissertation produced under the auspices of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, and the painstakingly elaborated rubrics characteristic of the Centre's work can be observed throughout. It is a skillfully assembled and judiciously synthesized contribution that will be an invaluable help to researchers whose work touches on aspects of early Greece. The thesis Frederiksen develops from his research, namely that EIA and archaic Greek communities were usually fortified, may be counted a somewhat less successful effort.

Eight chapters of discussion precede a 78-page catalogue of 132 walled sites. In the catalogue and throughout the book, the primary categorizing is into three groups, categories A (walls dated by excavation evidence), B (walls dated by masonry style) and C (walls attested by literary sources). Catalogue entries provide summaries of the walls at each site, subdivided under various headings (location, construction, date, etc.), and include essential bibliography. Many entries are accompanied by photographs and plans. The latter vary in quality, since they are reproduced from a wide variety of sources, but are almost always informative. Fifteen tables summarize the catalogue findings and arrange them by categories such as geographic distribution, chronology, and the elements and dimensions of walls; four maps plot the tables' most important categories.

A review this brief cannot do justice to the many problems illuminated in the text. Chapters include treatments of the "types" (i.e., the variety and character of spaces the walls enclosed) of fortification (Ch. 2); the Greek terminology of fortifications and their (meager) representation in the visual arts (Ch. 3); the destruction of early walls and the manifold ways walls were obscured by later settlement

(Ch. 4); the physical characteristics and construction of walls (Ch. 5); and the notoriously difficult questions related to the dating of walls (Ch. 6). Chapter 7 is an attempt to answer how walls were constructed, how they developed over time, and how pre-classical walls differed from later walls. Here Frederiksen employs a periodization with divisions into EIA (C9–8), seventh century, middle archaic (600–550) and late archaic (550–479), each period analyzed under the headings of distribution and topography, and construction and architecture.

Chapter 8 presents final conclusions and includes a valuable discussion of the importance of city walls for establishing the shape and identity of a *polis*. Frederiksen importantly asserts the usefulness of walls as an urbanization metric, as against temples. Adopting admittedly optimistic interpretations of the data, he thus argues that walls were the most common monumental structures in early Greek towns, and tentatively concludes that the *polis* may have developed along more secular lines than usually supposed.

The basic flaw in Frederiksen's thesis is that it often relies on evidence that does not yet exist and is likewise too sanguine about evidence that does exist. The former tendency is apparent in his discussion of what he calls the "problem of central Greece" (105–8). While Mycenaean urban centers concentrated in the Peloponnesos and central Greece, EIA concentrations shifted dramatically to the islands and Anatolian littoral, a phenomenon that seems to indicate that the mainland was isolated from eastern urbanization trends. Frederiksen implies, however, that the mainland walls of the Homeric poems have not been discovered because they have not been an archaeological priority, which may come as a surprise to Peloponnesian excavators. Frederiksen offers Lefkandi as a possible solution to the problem. While no fortifications have been found here, Frederiksen believes that their discovery will show that mainland EIA sites were fortified; yet this is to construct an argument for which there is at present no evidence.

Frederiksen's interpretation of existing evidence can also be problematic. As he acknowledges (7), ethnicity is a slippery concept, and while he claims it will not affect his thesis, he includes Cypriot Paphos and Salamis as evidence for EIA fortification, since they developed into Greek *poleis* by the C5. Ethnicity aside, the size of the Cypriot and Cretan intramural spaces and the relative sophistication of their walls are so much greater than other EIA sites that they should probably be considered outliers. In fact, only ten EIA sites outside Crete and Cyprus were fortified. Even granting that these walls have been accurately identified and dated (by no means certain), the number is exiguous. Moreover, again excepting Cre-

tan and Cypriot sites, the estimated intramural areas are tiny in comparison with later periods and at most of the sites it is possible that the walls enclosed refuges rather than settlements proper. The *C7* evidence is no better, and it is perhaps significant that Frederiksen restructures his chronological analysis from four groupings in the penultimate chapter to only two in his final analysis, before and after 600, for *polis* fortification only really becomes widespread after this date.

None of these criticisms mean that Frederiksen is not cautious or lacking excellent judgment at every turn, and it should be stressed that he diligently exposes his findings to alternate interpretations. Whatever the validity of its thesis, the book is extremely well conceived and a trove of information about a neglected subject.

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