

BOOK REVIEW

Shoes, Slippers and Sandals: Feet and Footwear in Classical Antiquity. Edited by SADIE PICKUP AND SALLY WAITE. London, UK and New York, NY: Routledge, 2019. Pp. xvii + 337. Hardback, \$155.00. ISBN: 978-147288763.

Like other items of clothing and adornment, shoes are bearers of meaning. Cultural anthropologists, social historians and fashion designers have studied footwear across the globe, from high heels to trainers, binding to fetishism. Classical scholars have shied away from calceology, tending to view shoes as extensions of dress history or as stylistic components for dating or identifying sculptures (i.e. Hermes of Praxiteles from Olympia). Such limitations have left no shortage of unanswered questions about ancient foot coverings. This illustrated volume derives from a conference held at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Great Northern Museum in summer 2015. Though neither a survey nor a complete history, it will nevertheless be consulted as a point of reference for many years to come. The contributors from the UK, Europe and elsewhere approach feet and footwear from archaeological, historical and literary perspectives. Following a general introduction that reviews past scholarship, fifteen core chapters are divided into four parts and cover a broad swathe of Greek and Roman evidence for shoes, sandals, slippers and boots. Readers learn where and how shoes were represented in antiquity through a series of object-based and thematic case studies. Ancient terminology is covered in the editor's introduction and again by Caspers ("*Pantāi Krēpides*: Shoe-talk from Homer to Herodas") whose focus is Greek poetry.

Ancient footwear, being made of perishable materials (like textiles), rarely survives in the archaeological record. Thus, Greene's chapter, "Metal Fittings on the Vindolanda Shoes: Footwear and Evidence for Podiatric Knowledge in the Roman World," which looks at evidence from the site in northern England (famous for its handwritten tablets) where over 4000 shoes were discovered, is especially welcome. Here we encounter the look and material of a unique assemblage and the practice of Roman podiatry: metal bars were fitted onto shoes to correct gait or lend additional support. Throughout the volume it becomes evident that

shoes are missing from our notice in other ways. In sculpture, shoes or sandals may have once been painted on, are concealed beneath long and heavy drapery or have broken off. Despite these limitations, the visual arts remain our most informative ancient source. As one author puts it: "Like dress, posture and attributes, footwear is part of the visual and metaphorical language of ancient art" (Christof, "The Footwear of the Antonine Monument from Ephesus", 296). Predictably, several chapters rely on Greek vases-painting as documentary evidence of ancient footwear. Waite and Gooch's chapter, "Sandals on the Wall: The Symbolism of Footwear on Athenian Painted Pottery," collects examples of hanging sandals on Athenian vases, breaking down the evidence by object, iconography, artist, provenance and shape. Despite the Etruscan context for just over 50% of their data-set, the authors believe that "the images reflect an Athenian mind-set" (41). Two other chapters, Toillon's, "At the Symposium: Why Take off our Boots? The Significance of Boots placed underneath the Kline on Attic Red-figure Vase Painting (c.500-440 BC)," and Young's "Donning Footwear: The Invention and Diffusion of an Iconographic Motif in Archaic Athens," reveal further instances where object agency and human action reflect social and political contexts on vases. Smith's essay ("The Left Foot Aryballos wearing a Network Sandal") bridges archaeology and visual art by exploring an archaic vase shape of uncertain fabric found at many Greek sites and perhaps related to funerary cult. By comparison, Phillippo's chapter, "Stepping onto the Stage: Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Tragic Footwear," employs vases alongside terracotta reliefs to analyze the import of barefoot Orestes approaching his father's tomb in the context of ancient performance.

"Monosandalism" is a theme treated by several authors. The most famous attestation in Greek myth is the hero Jason who enters a marketplace unrecognized and wearing one sandal (*monokrepis*), a story alluded to in art and coinage; while the Roman visual tradition favors one-shoed Achilles, interpreted by Chrétien as a hero's rite of passage in her "Achilles' Discovery on Skyros: Status and Representation of the *Monosandalos* in Roman Art." Blundell collects textual references to the phenomenon in her highly readable "One Shoe Off and One Shoe On: The Motif of *Monosandalism* in Classical Greece." She even puts one-shoed walking and Thucydides' theory (3.22-24) that the Plataeans did this to avoid slipping in the mud - to the test. The idea that wearing/removing one shoe is connected to religious ritual is supported by Blundell's discussion of the Derveni Krater, a massive bronze vessel discovered in a tomb in northern Greece, on which a hunter sports a single boot. Considerable reliance on Barr-Sharrar's 2008 monograph

(*The Derveni Krater: Masterpiece of Classical Greek Metalwork*) meant that some fundamental bibliography on the krater's findspot and its Dionysian iconographic program was disregarded or not consulted.¹ Furthermore, the *monosandalos* is a diverse symbol: in the Hellenistic "Slipper-Slapper" sculpture group from Delos, the removed shoe becomes a tool of Aphrodite's power and control (see Pickup, "A Slip and a Slap: Aphrodite and her Footwear"); for a larger-than-life sculpted foot associated with Roman Egypt, the material alone has imperial significance (see Parkin, "A Colossal Porphyry Foot in Newcastle"); the semi-shod boy on a Roman grave stele may be an initiate tied to "the chthonic sphere" (see Backe-Dahmen, "Sandals for the Living, Sandals for the Dead: Roman Children and their Footwear," 268).

Other highlights of the book include Molinelli's commentary on a shoemaker in the Agora ("Simon the Athenian: Archaeological, Sociological and Philosophical Remarks on a Philosopher Shoemaker"), Croom's consideration of a tiny shoe brooch of the 2nd century AD (Croom, "A 'Shoe' Brooch from the Roman Fort of South Shields"), and the various types of life-sized footwear on a single Ephesian monument (Christof). Key themes recurring across the chapters confirm the usefulness of the whole collection and demonstrate ways that feet and footwear supported the living and sustained the dead: the body and adornment, the erotic and apotropaic, votive and mortuary offering, transition and liminality, mobility and transformation.²

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¹ T. H. Carpenter, "Images and Beliefs: Thoughts on the Derveni Krater," in G. R. Tsetschladze et al. (eds), *Papers on Classical Art and Archaeology Presented to Sir John Boardman* (London, 2000), 51-59; M. Tiverios, "The Derveni Krater," in D. C. Kurtz (ed.), *Essays in Classical Archaeology for E. Hatzivassiliou 1977-2007* (Oxford, 2008), 203-212.

² See now R. M. Gondek and S. L. Sulosky Weaver (eds), *The Ancient Art of Transformation: Case Studies from Mediterranean Contexts* (Oxford/Philadelphia, 2019).