

Corpus der boiotischen Grab- und Weihreliefs des 6. bis 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.

By Valia Schild-Xenidou (*AM 20*). Pp. xiv + 365, b&w pls. 48. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 2008. €69. ISBN 978-3-8053-3861-5 (cloth).

The arrival of a new study examining the funerary and religious reliefs of ancient Boeotia is welcome, as the field is fertile ground for future studies. In this regard, Schild-Xenidou's volume should become the standard text. The author offers a comprehensive account of the extant evidence for Boeotian reliefs, providing a general analysis that maintains its focus upon the archaeological evidence rather than a broad survey of the wider schema. There is a wide contextualization of the archaeological issues, including questions of national identity, historical/political concerns, location and topography, foreign influences, the media used, and contemporary reception of imagery. Treatment of the question of "workmanship" is particularly insightful because it raises issues of sociopolitical interpretation, although this could have been taken further by the author. The presentation of the corpus and discussion of individual pieces are comprehensive, but analysis of their significance could have been expanded. Nevertheless, it is evident that this study should serve as a major catalyst for the future examination of Boeotian material.

Schild-Xenidou mentions two goals that are the key foci of the text: to provide extensive documentation of the corpus that had been previously bypassed and to classify various monuments by "type" according to their typology and historical development (3). The volume develops this theme (with ultimate success) to establish the chronological progression of these reliefs and the development of a Boeotian "formal" style, as well as to present the iconographical traditions (and peculiarities) of this convention (3). This is the

primary concern of chapter 2, which incorporates a wide range of material and effectively establishes these funerary and religious reliefs within their historical/archaeological contexts. After this discussion of the chronological and stylistic developments, chapter 3 considers the kinds of materials and forms being used for this type of relief in Boeotia. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the reliefs with relation to "type" and divides the corpus into three categories: female reliefs (161–73), male representations (173–95), and religious iconography (196–203). Chapter 5 provides the primary analysis of the religious reliefs, and chapter 6 provides the catalogue, one of the most valuable archaeological features of the book.

Chapter 2 presents an excellent account of the chronological and stylistic implications of these reliefs, outlining their archaeological and interpretative implications. As expected, Schild-Xenidou's primary focus is upon the Boeotian material, but she contextualizes the artifacts within an appropriate broader framework of influences (particularly Athenian). Developments of chronology, style, and workmanship largely focus on individual examples, which are rigorously described, yet the reader at times is left wondering what all this data means. There could have been further discussion of overall conclusions within this chapter, but this should not be viewed as a criticism. The wealth of material clearly justifies the significance of the work.

Chapter 3 highlights the significance of the production materials and the epigraphic evidence from the corpus. There is an appropriate amount of focus on the availability of stone, but

as Schild-Xenidou herself notes, the epigraphic material deserves more attention (151–52). The present study provides a good survey, but it does leave room for further analysis. All the same, this is not within the perceived parameters of a study that concentrates on the collation of Boeotian relief data.

Chapter 4 analyzes the figurative “types” within this Boeotian corpus by contrasting the meaning behind the seated matron figures and standing maids/servants. Schild-Xenidou presents an excellent comparison between the Boeotian and Athenian collections of data, highlighting the distinctive “national” interpretations of these forms of imagery (165). This consistency in use is also reflected in her discussion of the male imagery, which exemplifies the use of images that are similar to the Attic examples but slightly different in their Boeotian interpretation (173–95). This variation in “nationalistic” representation styles could be simply a result of the vast distinction in the size of the Attic and Boeotian corpora, but it is still of interest to note the different interpretations in funerary style in the two regions. Chapter 5 establishes an interesting contrast—religious

reliefs are relatively modest works compared with funerary reliefs. In general, analysis of the social significance of the cult attributions could have been expanded, but the catalogue itself should spark future discussion. Chapter 6 comprises the catalogue, presented in a detailed and thorough fashion and incorporating an excellent amount of bibliographical information that will facilitate further study.

There is little doubt about the overall value of this study, despite the few areas where the author might have elaborated. This book should become the standard work for future research in the study of Boeotian funerary and religious reliefs. It provides a potentially productive source of data for correlation and comparison with the wealth of Athenian material that has so far received most of the attention.

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