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Greek Armour E. Jarva: *Archaiologia on Archaic Greek Body Armour.* (Studia Archaeologica Septentrionalia 3.) Pp. 176; 61 ills. Rovaniemi: Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys: Societas Historica Finlandiae Septentrionalis, 1995. ISBN: 952-9888-03-1 (ISSN: 0786-5066).

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or believe that there is not a more comprehensible way of 'operationalising the concept of a "site"' (p. 28)? Nor is one easily convinced that 'dummy regression analysis' (p. 38) has much to do with history, long-term or other. Such pretentious obscurantism is not unfamiliar, but it is certainly self-defeating in terms of communicating ideas, and the end result is to make one suspect, perhaps unfairly, that the content is trivial.

Also unappealing is the consistently negative attitude to the work of other survey archaeologists, though the repeated (and unconvincing) remarks of self-justification (Chapter 2) suggest that the authors are not as confident of their own stance as they would have us believe.

The insistence on model-based archaeology, too, is wearisome and unhelpful; its result usually to bypass genuine problems of historical investigation. The tendencies to distortion inherent in such an approach have been effectively identified by C. Sourvinou-Inwood (in N. Marinatos and R. Hägg [edd.], *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches* [1993], p. 1). The predicament of model enthusiasts is well illustrated by a passage (on p. 454 of *Landscape...*), '...an ethnoarchaeological perspective... will not necessarily allow us to replace the old model with a more relevant but still simple model. More satisfactory models may need to become more complex and more specific...'. If the need is to move in the direction of ever more detailed and individual models, the constructs become not models at all but multifaceted explanations of historical circumstances—in other words, traditional historical research.

There is much useful information in this book, but it is often well concealed and unattractively packaged.

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GREEK ARMOUR

E. JARVA: *Archaiologia on Archaic Greek Body Armour*. (Studia Archaeologica Septentrionalia 3.) Pp. 176; 61 ills. Rovaniemi: Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys: Societas Historica Finlandiae Septentrionalis, 1995. ISBN: 952-9888-03-1 (ISSN: 0786-5066).

If you are going to do sums, you need to get the arithmetic right and have the courage to stand by the results. J., after painstakingly cataloguing finds, representations, and descriptions of all archaic Greek armour except helmets and shields, engages in a series of interesting computations based on the finds of armour at Olympia. They do not always add up, and he does not always make them count.

Take, for instance, his discussion of how widely various pieces of armour were used. Initially, it is argued that the number of helmets (c. 350) is larger than the number of shields (c. 280) because the production of bronze-reinforced shields began much later; the numbers are said to be roughly the same if the earliest helmets are discounted (pp. 111–12; cf. p. 125 n. 825 for more precise figures). Later, however, it is claimed that the larger number of helmets indicates the existence of a group of soldiers equipped with a helmet but not with a shield (p. 145). If that is inconsistent, the calculations of the frequency of use of bronze cuirasses are worse. Here the original assumption is that the finds are a random sample of the equipment used by hoplite armies, and that every member of the phalanx would be equipped with at least a helmet and shield. Since

there are only 33 bronze cuirasses as compared with 350 helmets, it is concluded that rather fewer than one in ten hoplites wore a metal cuirass (pp. 112–13). Subsequently, the basis for calculations changes and it is assumed that the finds primarily represent the equipment of the front rank, not of the whole army, on the grounds that some two-thirds of casualties would occur among front-rank soldiers. The upshot of the convoluted sums which ensue is that cuirasses now turn out to be worn by no more than one in fifty hoplites (p. 128). J. appears unaware of the discrepancy. Computations of the use of leg armour are further marred by a simple oversight: like the football commentator who spoke of substitutes as ‘three fresh men, three fresh legs’, J. forgets that every man has two shins and ankles. The numbers of greaves (225) and ankle guards (55), therefore, ought to be halved when comparing them with the number of helmets, and we accordingly arrive at half the ratios calculated by J. (p. 125): roughly one pair of greaves for every three helmets, and one pair of ankle guards for every thirteen helmets.

A failure to stand by one’s own conclusions is most evident in the sections on the weight and effectiveness of armour. It emerges that so-called composite corslets, whether made of leather or linen, would have weighed no less than bronze cuirasses (pp. 135–6), and it follows that there is no basis for the common view that the composite corslet was introduced to reduce the burden of armour and allow greater mobility in action (p. 138). This is quite an important result, yet it is completely ignored by the author himself, who continues to speak of ‘lightness’ as an advantage of linen armour (p. 140) and of the ‘lighter solutions offered by linen and leather corslets’ (p. 158). Even more striking is the argument, reprised from an unpublished dissertation by P. H. Blyth, that bronze becomes harder to penetrate than leather only at thicknesses of over one millimetre, and that archaic bronze cuirasses, which generally have a thickness of one millimetre or less, are therefore *less* effective than leather corslets (pp. 142–3). J. does not acknowledge the big question raised by this observation: if leather corslets were the same weight as bronze ones but more effective, as well as more easily made (p. 37) and cheaper (pp. 153–7), why did the Greeks adopt bronze cuirasses in the first place? J. suggests elsewhere that in vase-paintings wearers of bronze cuirasses may be of higher social status than wearers of composite corslets (p. 146). Putting two and two together, one suspects that he is tempted to argue that a bronze cuirass was a status symbol, which some hoplites chose to wear *despite* its relative ineffectiveness and *because* it was more expensive. Unfortunately, he shies away from actually saying so.

I regret having to be so critical of this study, because it does offer extensive and often stimulating discussions of the whole range of problems associated with the nature and origins of hoplite armour and phalanx warfare, as well as a scheme for dating armour on the basis of the density of perforations along the rim (pp. 65–72), and catalogues which not only update and expand existing work on the finds but also add a great deal to Hagemann’s old study of representations of armour in art. If the use of English, by the author’s own admission, is ‘vacillating’ (p. 5), we do gain something when the confusion between ‘hole’ and ‘whole’ (as in ‘the hole lower body’, p. 33) produces the comment that a simple pragmatic explanation cannot account for ‘the hole phenomenon’ of perforation (p. 66). The book is certainly useful, and several of its arguments are potentially quite important; if its arithmetic had been less reckless and its disposition otherwise more adventurous, it might have been very good.