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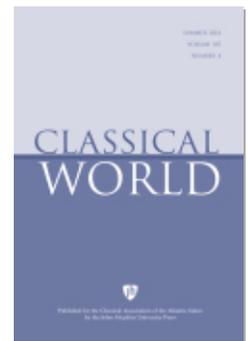
Paradise Earned: The Bacchic-Orphic Gold Lamellae of Crete (review)

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Yannis Tzifopoulos. *Paradise Earned: The Bacchic-Orphic Gold Lamellae of Crete*. Hellenic Studies, 23. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2010. Pp. x, 373. \$17.95 (pb.). ISBN 978-0674-02379-6.

Tzifopoulos' study of the Cretan gold lamellae makes a significant contribution to the recent flowering of scholarship on the mysterious texts known as the "Orphic" gold tablets. While other types of the gold lamellae have been found in small numbers in southern Italy and in northern Greece, the twelve Cretan tablets are not only the most numerous from a single area, but also the most uniform set of texts. Tzifopoulos is able to trace the significance of even minor variations to local contexts by focusing on this group, whose predominant form is "I am parched with thirst and I perish; give me to drink from the ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress. Who are you? Where are you from? I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven."

The first two chapters provide a detailed edition and commentary on the texts, both the twelve lamellae found in the region of Cretan Eleutherna and a selection of other texts. This level of detail, extending to descriptions of the letter forms and material conditions of the lamellae, is not available in any of the other collections and editions of the tablets. Tzifopoulos' treatment of the epigraphic details is significant because of the importance that letter forms and related information have played in the dating of these texts, many of which have no secure archaeological context to help scholars with the date. Tzifopoulos points out the inherent dangers of this situation, noting (65) that his text no. 8 (E4=OF 494 Bernabé) has letter forms that would seem to date from the early third or late fourth century B.C.E., while the archaeological context indicates a much later date, somewhere in the first century B.C.E. or C.E. Such observations on neglected details show the critical value of Tzifopoulos' work.

Tzifopoulos also sets out his idea that these Cretan lamellae are best understood in the context of the practice of putting *epistomia* (mouth coverings) on the dead. The oval shape of some of the Cretan tablets, both inscribed and uninscribed, suggests that the gold lamellae were placed on the mouths of the dead, and Tzifopoulos describes parallels from the Mycenaean gold death masks to Byzantine and even modern Greek practices, although a local adaptation of the lamellae to this practice remains most plausible.

In the third and fourth chapters, Tzifopoulos locates the Cretan tablets within a number of broader contexts, in relation to the larger corpus of "Orphic" gold tablets, the hypothetically reconstructed Orphic tradition, and the general tradition of hexameter poetry performance, both rhapsodic and oracular. He then locates them within a specifically Cretan context, looking at both the wider literary tradition about Crete and the cultic contexts as reconstructed from epigraphic and material remains. In the afterword, he looks at survivals of the *epistomia* tradition in Byzantine and modern Greek contexts.

The main weakness of the book is its lack of organization and structured arguments, since important ideas often get buried under a superabundance of detail. Tzifopoulos provides enormous amounts of information about possible contexts without a clear argument about which elements are more significant or which comparisons are more meaningful. While his discussions of particular texts or sites are detailed and often insightful, the uninitiate may have trouble grasping the relevance of those insights to the larger project. Although the narrow focus of the book means that it will be most useful to specialists in the field, Tzifopoulos could have done more to highlight his best points even for those with greater knowledge of the debates.

Nevertheless, the close analysis of the texts and their contexts permits the author to make the kind of important observations that can only come from such a detailed study. By confining himself to a limited group of texts, Tzifopoulos is able to focus on the particular variations and their relation to the local contexts, while his attention to epigraphic and archaeological minutiae also enables him to raise questions applicable to the wider set of lamellae, even if those questions are not always answerable due to the absence of the kind of contextual data available for the Cretan tablets. Tzifopoulos' study will prove important for specialists and a valuable addition to the field.

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Henriette van der Blom. *Cicero's Role Models: The Political Strategy of a Newcomer*. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xii, 388. \$150.00. ISBN 978-0-19-958293-8.

It is well known that in all his writing Cicero makes extensive use of *exempla* to advance his persuasive goals. These may take the form of the statements or actions of individuals or of an entire people that somehow reflect, either positively or negatively, on the issue at hand. The phenomenon has been investigated a good deal, usually genre by genre. This new study, a revised Oxford dissertation by Henriette van der Blom, differs in that it is more comprehensive, including and comparing Cicero's use of examples in the various genres, and also explores Cicero's choice of examples in relation to his position as a *novus homo* in Roman politics.

The first several chapters go over some familiar ground about the tendency of Romans of Cicero's time to accord great deference to their ancestors and regard their authority as virtually incontestable, as well as Cicero's own background and education. Readers of these early sections should not give up, however: more interesting and original matter lies ahead. In Rome, noble ancestry was regarded as establishing a strong claim to be elected to public office and was exploited accordingly. As a *novus homo*, Cicero developed strategies to compensate for this disadvantage. In particular, van der Blom finds that Cicero developed three "alternative claims to ancestry": (1) that exemplary Romans of the past can serve as *exempla* for all Romans, not just their family members, (2) past *novi homines* can serve as *exempla* for those currently striving to attain the highest offices, (3) one can select specific historical figures as one's personal *exempla* (7).

This "strategy," if such it was, applies with greatest force to Cicero in the time before and during his consulship, when he was creating rhetorical space for a non-*nobilis* persona. As a young man Cicero was at pains to define his own position as a hardworking and upright public servant in opposition to the established nobility, or a section of it, represented as lazy, corrupt, and hostile to *novi homines*. Once elected consul, he could take some pride in his achievement. Subsequently the *novus homo* rhetoric is mostly absent except in occasional defenses of *novi homines* elected in opposition to *nobiles* (*Mur.*, *Planc.*), with the exception of some animadversions at the beginning of *In Pisonem*. In later life Cicero was, as van der Blom shows, concerned to establish his own exemplarity.

Van der Blom's approach yields some new insights, such as the unexpected revival of *novus homo* language in Cicero's late narrative of his rediscovery of Archimedes' tomb (*Tusc.* 5.66 with van der Blom 296). She is also good on Marius as the single Ciceronian *exemplum* with the widest field of application—from the stern consul putting down Saturninus' revolt