



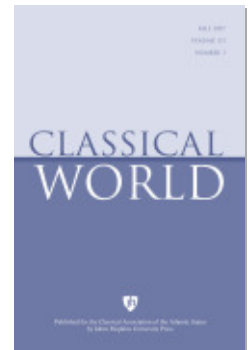
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REVIEWS in This Issue:

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the polis (chapter 2). The incentives of power were such that officials controlled resources greater than their personal finances through their service, making such office-holding attractive to the elite and competitive, and, over time, it prompted institutional change (chapter 3). A recurring problem in these chapters is the limited evidence. Bubelis does his best to reconcile disparate sources but ultimately—without a more robust theoretical framework to hold the chronologically fragmentary pieces of evidence he discusses—many of the suggestions can only be speculative. To be fair, Bubelis is aware of this problem, but this joint-the-dots approach makes this part of the book rather old-fashioned, an exercise in piecing together “intriguing clues.” Frequently, Bubelis has to couch his argument in phrases like “it is likely that,” “it is reasonable to think that,” or “we cannot be sure that.” That is, despite the valiant effort to build a coherent picture, the evidence is not strong.

Bubelis is on a surer footing in the second part of the book, where he outlines the duties of treasurers (chapter 4) and the development of sacred property administration into the classical period (chapters 5–7). Here Bubelis argues that there were differences between categories of sacred property used for various purposes and administered by different officials. Only *tamiai*, by virtue of their exclusive status, were in control of *hiera* wealth (immobile property, off-limits outside cult practice), whereas other sacred officials managed the day-to-day finances, with the authority to designate *demosia* (public) property as *hosia* and therefore to make funds available for lending or leasing. The tribes were the main locus of these “fiscal innovation[s]” in the immediate pre- and post-Kleisthenic period, but these developments occurred piecemeal and primarily as a result of intra-elite competition.

This is not a book for the undergraduate syllabus but squarely targeted at a specialized audience with technical knowledge. Even so, a firmer editorial hand should have been taken with the dense text that makes the argument, in places, difficult to follow. The claims made here are rather grand: that this is a reappraisal of the Athenian public economy and the institutional history of Athens (17–18). It is not a radical one for sure: Solon remains a central, almost domineering, figure—a “catalyst” for future institutional change—the elite are motivated by competition with one another, religious innovation is conservative and traditional by impulse. These conclusions are not necessarily wrong, but they are hardly surprising. The book does, however, shine a light on a relatively neglected part of Athenian constitutional history and makes a strong case for a greater understanding of the role of sacred property and its administration in the classical period. For that, Bubelis has provided a great service.

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