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Ο Διόνυσος στην Άνδρο ή οι μεταμορφώσεις ενός μύθου. Dimitris. I. Kyrtatas. Athens, Arga, 2102 119 pages, + 17 plates. ISBN 978-960-325-965-7

Book reviewed by Erica Angliker. University of Zurich/ Birkbeck University of London

Erica Angliker
Birkbeck University of London/ University of Zurich
erica.morais.angliker@access.uzh.ch

Recent research on Dionysos has pushed the knowledge about the god beyond his traditional associations with wine, intoxication, ecstasy and mania.[1] Much has been gained by exploring materials other than the primarily literary sources of 5th-century Athens. Indeed, today far more is known about Dionysos from the study of sarcophagi, papyrus, reliefs and other material culture.[2] Even the iconography of Athenian painted pottery (500-300 BC), which has traditionally been understood as binding Dionysos to wine, ecstasy and theatre, has now been shown to refer to other aspects of his persona that pertained to public and private life related to political and cultural situations.[3] Progress in this area of research is also indebted to studies that have shown

[1] Two books recently published unite several papers on various aspects of Dionysos: R. Schlesier (ed.), 2011. *A Diferent God? Dionysos and Ancient Polytheism.* De Gruyter, Berlin.; A. Bernabé (ed.) [*et alii*], 2013. *Redefining Dionysos*. De Gruyter, Berlin.

[2] Ibid.

[3] C. Isler-Kerényi 2015. *Dionysos in Classical Athens. An Understanding through Images.* Brill, Leiden.

[4] M. E. Caskey 1998. "Ayia Irini: Temple Studies". In: *Kea-Kythnos: History and Archaeology: Proceedings of an International Symposium, Kea-Kythnos, 22-25 June 1994, L. G. Mendoni & A. J. Mazarakis Ainian*, (eds.), 123-138. Boccard, Paris; A. Bernabé 2013; "Dionysos in the Mycenaean World". In: Redefining Dionysos, A. Bernabé [et al.],(ed.), 23–37. De Gruyter, Berlin.

that Dionysos, like Demeter, is one of the most ancient gods in the Greek pantheon, and was already worshiped in the Bronze Age period.[4]

The book under review, Ο Διόνυσος στην Άνδρο ή οι μεταμορφώσεις ενός μύθου, *Dionysos on Andros or the Metamorphoses of One Myth,* falls among recent publications that attempt a new approach to the study of Dionysos. Its aim is to bring together all evidence related to the cult of Bacchus on the Cycladic island of Andros from Antiquity to the twentieth century. Dimitris I. Kyrtatas does not simply offer a compilation of sources, however, but also analyses the ways in which the stories that grew from the cult of Dionysos on Andros were reshaped and adapted by people from various epochs to serve their own ends. In this sense, the book is novel in as much as few scholars have hitherto examined attitudes towards Dionysos over a long period of time. One of the single notable exceptions is John Boardman, who recently published a study on the many changes that the 'Triumph of Dionysos' underwent from Antiquity to the Renaissance.[5]

Kyrtatas' book is divided into three chapters and a useful index. Complementing the text are seventeen illustrations of Archaic and Classical vases depicting Dionysos, churches on Andros believed to have been built over the god's temples, Renaissance paintings inspired by myths from Andros, and maps of the island produced by 17th- and 18th-century explorers. Regrettably, there is no modern map of the island indicating the sites mentioned in the book, and no illustrations of ancient Andrian coins, which are not only the most important evidence of the cult of Dionysos on the island, but also the sole ancient depictions of the god on Andros.

In Chapter One, "Antiquities" (pp. 9-39), Kyrtatas offers a synopsis of some of the most important evidence of the cult of Dionysos on Andros. First, he summarizes myths related to Dionysos from all over ancient Greece. Given the sheer number of these, the list can obviously not be exhaustive and the author conveniently selects those most relevant to his discussion, with a strong emphasis on the tale of Ariadne and Dionysos, which is closely associated with the Cyclades, particularly Naxos, and of extreme importance to all that concerns matrimonial rituals. He then turns to the cult of Dionysos specifically on Andros, with a discussion on 4th- and 3rd-century BC coins that display the image of the god on the obverse. From there he moves on to ancient sources that refer to mythological narratives involving the cult of Dionysos on Andros and the god's power to mutate and transform things. Here Kyrtatas discusses Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 2.106 (103) and

[5] John Boardman, *The Triumph of Dionysos: Convivial Processions from Antiquity to the Present Day.* Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014.

31.13), who, citing the Roman aristocrat Mukianos (50 AD), noted that feasts honouring Dionysos were celebrated on the 5th of January (hibernal agricultural feasts), when water tasting like wine would spout from a fountain close to the god's temple. Kyrtatas does well to speculate as to whether the temple of Dionysos mentioned by Pliny was located on Paleopolis, in Andros, where various ancient artifacts have in fact been found, but at times his reading of this archaeological material is too sanguine. Although research has been conducted on Paleopolis in recent years, and much is now known about Andros, I would not venture so far as to say that further excavation at the site will necessarily lead to the recovery of the temple of Dionysos or generate more information about either the god or his temple. Kyrtatas also discusses other ancient authors who refer to the cult of Dionysos and the transformation of water into wine (e.g. Plutarch) and, most importantly, Philostratus (*Eikones*, 1.25), who described the paintings of Thesea, which featured the wedding of Dionysos and Ariadne and a scene of Andrians drinking from a river of wine in the company of satyrs, sileni and bacchantes. The texts of Philostratus, the last ancient testimony of the cult of Dionysos on Andros, are crucial to Kyrtatas's argument as they relate to the revival of the god's cult not only on Andros but also in the rest of Europe, a topic that will be closely examined by the author in the next chapter. This one, however, closes with an analysis of the god's transformation of water into wine and the assimilation of the miracle into the Christian gospels.

Chapter 2, "The Rebirth" (pp. 68-80), deals with the survival and transformation of the myth of Dionysos on Andros from Late Antiquity to its reception in Renaissance Italy. One of the great achievements of this chapter is that it manages to reunite various sources related to the reception of the cult of the Andrian Dionysos not only in Europe but also on the island of Andros itself through medieval and Renaissance inventories that are not readily available. Kyrtatas first shows how on Andros the cult of Dionysos was assimilated into Christianity. A mosaic with pagan motifs of wine-leaves, for example, once adorned the early Christian basilica (5th AD) of Paleopolis, which was destroyed by an earthquake and replaced by another building abandoned in the 17th century. Yet apart from this church, the author cannot trace any other evidence of the assimilation of Dionysos into the Byzantine culture of Andros. During this same period, however, in numerous manuscripts of no longer known provenance –some quite rare – were reproduced in the monasteries of Andros. This unique collection even attracted scholars from Constantinople in the mid-ninth century AD. As an important repository of manuscripts, the island turned into a wonderful source of texts for Europeans at the onset of the Renaissance. The author shows how the continuous reproduction of manuscripts on the island kept Classical culture alive within the ecclesiastic cast, and also how Catholic priests used these sources to revive faith in the

miracle of the transformation of water into wine at a time of religious decline. Kyrtatas also studies in detail the island's attraction to several important navigators and explorers who visited the island and produced their own maps, into which they added information from Pliny the Elder, whose Latin text was circulating throughout Europe. One of these was Cristoforo Buondelmonti (1386 - c. 1430), a Florentine monk and traveller, and a pioneer in promoting first-hand knowledge of Greece and its antiquities throughout the Western world. Kyrtatas reveals that Buondelmonti made many mistakes while reading Pliny the Elder – whose Latin text he could not fully understand – and ultimately incorporated the misinterpretations into his description and maps of Andros. The Venetian cartographer Bartolomeo Zamberti (1473-1543), on the other hand, produced a more accurate description of Andros since by his time Pliny's text had been translated into Italian. Kyrtatas draws attention to archaeological information that can be retrieved from the work of such men, who often mentions artifacts that are lost today, as in the case of Buondelmonti's description of a statue of Dionysus as a bare-chested, effeminate, horned child crowned with vines and seated on two panthers. This section of the book is especially interesting as it not only sheds light on how Renaissance explorers viewed the Cyclades, in this case Andros, but also reveals that the image that they concocted was a amalgam of what they observed and what they read or misread in ancient texts. It also shows that their maps and descriptions of the islands improved substantially once the works of ancient authors were translated into modern languages such as Italian.

Kyrtatas goes on to show that as soon as maps and descriptions of the Aegean made by these navigators and explorers arrived in Italy during the Renaissance, the myths of Andros, particularly those related to the feasts of Dionysos and the miracle of the transformation of water into wine, roused great interest. In addition to translations of Pliny the Elder, which helped construct an image of Andros, those of Terence's comedy, *Andria,* and, more importantly, of the *Eikones* of Philostratus likewise date to the Renaissance. Kyrtatas argues that all this created the perfect environment for stimulating Italian painters to depict several mythological themes related to Andros. Inspired by Philostratus, for example, Titian painted the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (Prado Museum, Madrid) for the Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso I d'Este. Ancient texts also inspired the artist to compose *Bacchus and Ariadne* (National Gallery, London), which drew on mythological tales about Naxos that had reached the circles of Renaissance intellectuals. Titian's work, in turn, inspired many other European painters (e.g. Alejandro Varderi, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck and Nicolas Poussin) to depict Bacchanalia on Andros. In this way, these feasts became one of the most popular iconographical themes in 17th -century Europe.

Chapter Three, "New Times" (pp. 81-113) deals with the metamorphoses of the Andrian myth of Dionysos from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. An examination of documents from Andros allows Kyrtatas to conclude that the revival of interest in the Dionysian miracle of the transformation of water into wine caused by its assimilation into Christianity was short-lived as the stories related to it disappeared after 1698 with the resignation of the last Catholic bishop. He demonstrates, however, that the story of the miracle continued to be kept alive by the local population, which began associating the prodigy with the Church of Panaghia Kumulus in the region of the Menites, where lay a source of water connected with the building. According to the local population, the church is built over an ancient temple of Dionysos, a belief that – as Kyrtatas observes – ignores the fact that Greek antiquities on Andros are located in Paleopolis and relocates the myth to Menites, a region where an abundance of water and vegetation better recalls ancient descriptions of Dionysian feasts. Such local stories about Menites came to the attention of many navigators (e.g. Robert Saulger 1637-1709; Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, 1656-1708) who visited the islands, but as they could not find any ancient temple of Dionysos on Andros, they turned to Naxos where stood – and still stands – a monumental temple on the islet of Palatia, which is connected to the larger island. Kyrtatas ends his book with a list of recent scholars interested in the relationship between Andros and Dionysos, namely, archaeologists and classicists (e. g. Jean Alexandre Buchon; James Irving Manatt), who came to the island to examine antiquities and search for the famous temple of Dionysos. One of the last of these was the historian of Greek religion, Karl Kereny.

Kyrtatas's book offers a rare analysis of a local cult and myth of Dionysos and its transmutations over the course of many centuries and through several intentional revivals. It brings together a great deal of well known material, such as paintings by famous Renaissance artists whose work was inspired by one of the many transmutations of the myth, but at the same time draws on rare historical documents that are not easily accessible to classicists. The volume is a great contribution not only to classicists interested in the ancient cult of Dionysos, but also to those interested in the history of the reception of classical culture, a field that has gained much attention in recent years. I would also like to add that the book is of particular interest to archaeologists as the exploration of sites always deals with amalgams of old and modern stories that have been reshaped down the centuries and require disentangling in order to illuminate the dynamics of the transformation of ancient sites and monuments.