



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

**Review of Santillo Frizell, B. (2016) Tra Terra e Cielo.
Cupole e Obelischi nella Cultura Mediterranea**
Bryshaert, A.

Citation

Bryshaert, A. (2018). Review of Santillo Frizell, B. (2016) Tra Terra e Cielo. Cupole e Obelischi nella Cultura Mediterranea. *Gnomon*, 90(8), 723-728. doi:10.17104/0017-1417-2018-8-723

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licensed under Article 25fa Copyright Act/Law \(Amendment Taverne\)](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3223103>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



B 20953

GNOMON

KRITISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT
FÜR DIE GESAMTE
KLASSISCHE ALTERTUMSWISSENSCHAFT

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON

MARTIN BENTZ · RUTH BIELFELDT
PETER EICH · HANS-JOACHIM GEHRKE
CHRISTOPH HORN · MARTIN HOSE
JOSEPH MARAN · KATHARINA VOLK
PAUL ZANKER

SCHRIFTLEITUNG

MARTIN HOSE (VERANTWORTLICH) UND
OLIVER SCHELSKE

Online-Ausgabe auf
elibrary.chbeck.de



90. BAND

Sonderdruck

HEFT 8

VERLAG C.H.BECK MÜNCHEN

person des Herodes keine Rolle, es wird hauptsächlich seine Bedeutung als Politiker und Bauherr beleuchtet. Zwar wird der Titel 'König von Judäa' seinem eigentlichen Herrschaftsbereich und auch seinem Wirkungsbereich nicht ganz gerecht; dies tut dem Ganzen aber keinen Abbruch. Das Buch bietet somit eine umfassende und durch die vielen, sehr ansprechenden Bilder und Grafiken auch eine sehr anschauliche Einführung in die Herodes-Forschung, enttäuscht jedoch auch eingeleichte Herodes-Kenner keinesfalls.

Berlin

Judith Göppinger

✱

Barbro Santillo Frizell: *Tra Terra e Cielo*. Cupole e obelischi nella cultura mediterranea. Firenze: Mauro Pagliai 2016. 175 S. zahlr. z.T. farb. Abb. (Storie del Mondo. 26.) 22 €.

Monumentality and monumental architectural phenomena have forever fascinated the general public and scholars in archaeology, art history, urban studies and anthropology alike. Monumentality is difficult to describe in universal terms due to its very tight correlation to the cultural sphere in which a specific monumental feature belongs. What may be considered monumental by some may be considered no more than normal by others. Monumental features, specifically monumental architecture, do seem to have some universal characteristics in common, often defined as: 'great in importance, extent, or size'.¹ The word 'monument' is defined as: (1) A statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event; (2) A structure or site of historical importance or interest; (3) An enduring and memorable example or reminder... The word itself comes from the Latin word, *monumentum*, from *monere*: to remind.² A few decades ago, Trigger defined monumental architecture as: «when its scale and elaboration exceeds the requirements of any practical functions that a building is intended to perform».³ More recently, monumental architecture was described as: «... [an] ongoing, constantly renegotiated *relationship* between thing and person, between the monument(s) and the person(s) experiencing the monument».⁴ These and many other discussions of the monumental and specifically monumental architecture, form an important theme of the book under review and bring together several concepts that play a larger or smaller role in the content of this 2016 publication by B. Santillo Frizell (hereafter BSF). The main title of the book: 'Tra Terra e Cielo', may confuse buyers because two other books with the same title exist, including another archaeological publication with a related content.⁵ The book reviewed here is composed of an introduction, three

¹ 'Monumental': C. Soanes and A. Stevenson (eds.) 'Concise Oxford English Dictionary'. 11th Ed. Oxford, 926.

² 'Monument': Ibid., 926. Also J.F. Osborne 2014. 'Monuments and monumentality'. In J.F. Osborne (ed.), 'Approaching Monumentality in Archaeology'. Albany, 1–19, esp. 3–4.

³ B.G. Trigger, 1990. 'Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour'. *WA* 22(2): 119–132, esp. 119.

⁴ Osborne 2014: 3. Original emphasis.

⁵ F. Farina 2015. 'Tra Terra E Cielo. Luoghi Di Culto Nel Mondo Rurale Dell'Alto Salento': on labour involved in megalithic and underground constructions; also A.G. Barrili 2012. 'Tra Terra e Cielo' (novel).

large main chapters, and a brief epilogue. A bibliography and an illustration list finishes it off.

In the introduction BSF explains that her research into Mediterranean construction employs a broader approach than purely archaeological, thus it brings together various disciplines and current ideas. The centre of her work lies in the premise that the function of building can be explained both by individual and collective players. The construction of monuments that are destined to survive the time in which they were erected seems to be a recurrent and universal phenomenon that signaled more than political propaganda alone. Such building efforts, seen from the constructor's/builder's perspective also contribute to the creation of a sense of identity and legitimation. The questions asked are: why does the material world manifests itself everywhere in the world in the same way? Do we see a global story or are there multiple stories to be told? With the concepts of both function and symbolism, recognized in works of monumental proportion, it becomes clear that these are not forming opposite categories but that they are tightly interwoven and interact together, as BSF writes.¹ This resounds several conference papers in Osborne's 2014 book and also some earlier publications by BSF herself, especially her 1998 paper which discussed in detail the labour efforts exerted in order to move the 120 tonne lintel block of the monumental entrance of the largest tholos tomb built at Mycenae, the so-called 'Treasure of Atreus'.² In the 1980s, she was one of the few scholars who studied in detail the series of acts in monumental mortuary constructions in the Mycenaean context from a distinct human labour perspective³ and she discussed the vital social roles of both the elite rulers as patrons of these constructions as well as the builders themselves. She then emphasized the performative character – not dissimilar to a triumphal procession – of moving such large building blocks through the landscape since such an event would have attracted plenty of onlookers along the road. This, in turn, would have had an impact on how these local or foreign onlookers would regard the ruling elite and their power to mobilize such workforce for what could be understood as totally excessive construction. Simultaneously, it would have had an impact on the workforce itself too as this event would be retold and make them be remembered. The joint efforts may have resulted in a feeling of group identity among themselves while setting them apart from those that did not participate in the process, and may have contributed to a sense of belonging through participation in such excessive labour. That 1998 paper was an important social study of the economics of building as a process (rather than the end product), and it drew in useful archaeological and historical parallels to illustrate her points. Chapter three of 'Tra Terra e Cielo', on the traditional trulli (singl. trullo) from Puglia, South Italy, fulfils a similarly comparative role. BSF points out the usefulness of analogies between cultures with written or visual (sculpted, carved) documentation of building processes for those cultural groups in which such evidence does not exist, notably the Mycenaean context.

¹ This book, p. 12.

² B. Santillo Frizell 1998. 'Monumental building at Mycenae: its function and audience'. *OpAth* 22: 103–116.

³ But see W.G. Cavanagh and C.B. Mee 1999. 'Building the Treasury of Atreus'. In P.P. Betancourt et al. (eds.), 'Meletemata: Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener'. Liège, 93–102: practical considerations on construction efforts.

Chapter one (pp 17–62) on the Mycenae case study starts with a sketch of the mythological stories connected to Mycenae which, according to BSF, may have played a role in the collective memory of people in later periods to keep returning to Mycenae (e.g. in Hellenistic times to construct the theatre on top of the so-called Clytemnestra's tomb). A page-long overview of how Mycenae was initially rediscovered and first excavated outlines Schliemann's role there. Her equally brief overview of stone use at Mycenae refers to both limestone and conglomerate as the main types employed in the Bronze age monuments. A practical link to conglomerate is discussed for its use at Tiryns too but the social dimension of this stone use and the transport issues between Tiryns and Mycenae, convincingly discussed by J. Maran and several others, are not referred to.¹ The focus on the 'Treasury of Atreus' zooms in on the question whether the dome of the monument, which is described in architectural manuals (which ones?) as a false or pseudo-dome, is technologically correct or not; the Anglo-Saxon terminology refers to corbeled vaulting. A direct comparison is made to the construction of the trulli of Puglia (p. 26). BSF and her husband conducted a technical analysis (how?) of its construction and its static properties to test the apparently random usage of the terminology of the Mycenaean dome as false or pseudo-dome. Their findings were confirmed by a cited doctoral thesis (2007) that concluded that this dome should not be called false. In the following pages, BSF provides an overview of domes, explaining their appearance in the Mycenaean context through predecessors on Crete, esp. the so-called *koulouras* (Mallia, Phaistos, Knossos) which, according to her, were domed over whereas the hypothetical (vernacular nature of these) domes themselves did not survive. This hypothesis is fraught with problems as indicated in a reply by P. Halstead to T. Strasser's paper on the function of these *koulouras*.² The rest of the section on domes describes the cover of the Pantheon (Rome), the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and the central dome of the Agia Sophia in Istanbul in terms of materials and the importance these monuments had in their own context. The connection between these cupolae and the Mycenae beehive tomb is not made clear when the latter's construction details follow in detail but are unreferenced (pp. 36–40).³ This description ends with the mentioning of the largest monolith ever employed in Greek architecture and leads into the discussion of human labour efforts and the symbolic meaning of such efforts by means of a set of comparisons: Assyrian, Egyptian, Chinese, Swedish and contemporary examples (pp. 40–57). In each, the joint efforts are emphasized and the role of the elite ruler made clear. Moreover, the importance of joint efforts in lifting/transporting heavy items (monoliths, sculptures) in processions, as expressed in the introduction, is illustrated in these examples.

¹ J. Maran 2006. 'Mycenaean citadels as performative space'. In J. Maran et al. (eds), 'Constructing Power: Architecture, Ideology, and Social Practice'. Hamburg, 75–91; A. Brysbaert 2015. 'Set in Stone? Technical, socio-economic and symbolic considerations in the construction of the Cyclopean-style walls of the Late Bronze Age Citadel at Tiryns, Greece'. In: C. Bakels and H. Kamermans (eds.), *Analecta Praehistorica Leidensia* 45: Leuven, 69–90.

² P. Halstead 1997. 'Storage strategies and states on prehistoric Crete: a reply to Strasser' (*JMA* 10 [1997] 73–100). *J. of Med. Arch.* 10(1), 103–107, esp. 103–5.

³ See Cavanagh and Mee 1999; the 2007 PhD mentioned in 'Tra Terra e Cielo' (p. 28).

The chapter closes with a discussion about influences of the Egyptians and Hittites on Mycenaean construction methods (pp. 60–63) but this aspect is not thought through by BSF and no references to existing studies on these topics are cited.¹ This is rather problematic and no other options have been considered even though they are discussed in the literature. That artisans, builders and other craftspeople moved around in the past is not doubted but it would have been useful, considering the social and human nature as the main emphasis of the book, that the question was posed as to how this was all organized, implemented and executed? And if people travelled to work elsewhere, when did they do this, was this a seasonal task? Who sent them or did they go on their own accounts? Such social issues linked to artisanal movements have been thoroughly discussed for the Aegean Bronze Age context and beyond.

Chapter two (pp. 63–102) discusses the original meaning and purpose of monolithic obelisks known from Pharaonic Egypt and how these have been taken away from there and placed in new locations sometimes millennia later. While these impressive stone feats were originally imbued with religious symbolism (p. 71ff), they later became symbols of freedom or power (p. 84) since the cost in terms of human and other resources required to transport and place them elsewhere often turned out to be double the original budget calculation (pp. 89–90). Their symbolic meaning, therefore, shifted from their original usage in religious contexts over their various contextual repurposing phases, started by Roman leaders, continued by papal leaders, and ending with Mussolini's controversial feats. The latter (ab)used the Roman heritage and made ancient Roman iconography and architecture central to his own construction works, or imitated it (p. 99, figs 73–74), as a way to legitimate his own power position and his imperialist expansion politics to society. Obtaining obelisks (e.g. from annexed Ethiopia, the obelisk of Axum was taken in 1936) equally befitted his political propaganda (pp. 96–99). In the repurposing of obelisks in their new locations, their placement in the very midst of an important central place made them the utmost focal point of the entire constructed landscape; notable examples come from various locations in Rome (pp. 62–65, 74ff), Constantinople, and in Israel. In this chapter the enormous human and animal efforts play an important role in the production of meaning from top-down (elite-based) and/or bottom-up (people involved in the practical work), and the transport efforts over water are discussed in relation to the pharaonic transport as well as later transport to Europe. Also land routes in Egypt were used for the transport of building materials from quarries to Amarna, for example.²

Chapter three (103–162) discusses the anthropologically-oriented fieldwork that BSF carried out in the 1980s (see introduction, p. 14) during which she employed the observation-participation methodology while studying the repair works carried out at the trulli. Introducing the trulli in their socio-economic landscape through a brief (but virtually unreferenced) historical overview of the region with rather bad stony soil (pp. 103–109), these trulli became the preferred house construction as the

¹ C. Maner 2012. 'A comparative study of Hittite and Mycenaean fortification architecture'. In: N. Stampolidis et al. (eds), 'Athanasia. The earthly, the Celestial and the Underworld in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age.' Heraklio, 55–66.

² V. De Laet et al 2015. 'Integrated remote sensing investigations of ancient quarries and road systems in the Greater Dayr al-Barshā region, Middle Egypt: a study of logistics'. JAS 55: 286–300. Roman examples are known too.

result of land clearance of these stones (used also for field walls and streets) which turned this land into a useful agricultural resource. The chapter continues by introducing the Lisi family that has been involved in constructing, repairing and restoring trulli by hand and passing on this skill and know-how from one to the next generation, keeping this traditional architecture in existence without architectural designs. The author's interest in dome construction features in a detailed description of how this is achieved but the relevance to earlier chapter sections on domes is not made clear and the text becomes rather anecdotal at this point. In 2013 BSF went back to Puglia and observed the positive effects of having been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1996 and the fact that the inscription of both Mycenae (together with Tiryns in 1999) and the trulli into the UNESCO World Heritage list has helped to protect the monuments. It also brought useful economic income to the regions and boosted the national pride and identity of both Greece and Italy on the basis of their architectural heritage. According to BSF, their WH status also preserved forms of intangible heritage such as stories and myths (in the case of Mycenae), and the passing on of the skills of traditional building into ongoing restoration work of the trulli. The epilogue reflects the author's feelings and observations made when she returned to revisit the trulli after a period of c. 30 years. No conclusive chapter discussing the findings of all three case studies and drawing them together is included in this publication.

Each of the three chapters form useful but stand-alone case studies which reflect the multiple fieldwork projects carried out by BSF, and which illustrate her points made in the introduction emphasizing the social and the socio-economic approach to the built environment, and specifically some of the universal characteristics of monumental building, including aspects of social memory, meaning production and collective identities. Each type of construction (tholos, obelisk, trullo) has very different contexts in which these types interact with human actors in the production of meaning and this is, in each case, briefly outlined while this was not the main priority. The book, however, would have benefited from an additional chapter that discusses in more detail the socio-economic issues from a more theoretical and anthropological perspective and that are deemed crucial in this publication. Agency theory,¹ objects biographies² and human material entanglement studies³ and anthropological approaches⁴ are well-developed in archaeological research and form regularly employed theoretical frameworks since the 1990s. These additional approaches with a stronger archaeological or historical contextual study (not the mythology, and properly referenced) would have informed the deeper interpretations of the phenomena at hand as has already been illustrated in other (recent) publications.⁵ Many of the thoughts expressed in this publication unfortunately do not refer to these well-established works which would have further supported the statements and conclusions made here. Other parts also suffer from some lack of full referencing which would be required from an academic publication (e.g. section on

¹ E.g. M.-A. Dobres and J. Robb 2000. 'Agency in Archaeology', London.

² Standard read: A. Appadurai (ed.) 1986. 'The Social Life of things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives'. Cambridge.

³ I. Hodder 2012. 'Entangled. An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things'. Oxford.

⁴ BSF mentions that case study three was carried out spontaneously and intuitively, employing the methods of B. Malinowski of 'observant participation' whose work is not referenced or evaluated and only briefly explained (p. 14). She also mentions (but not cites) the work by Braudel and 'The Annals School' (pp. 151ff)

⁵ J. Osborne's 2014. But also J. Maran et al. 2006 with very relevant chapters to Mycenaean monumentality.

Mussolini's fascist ideology and building, pp. 94–101; Egyptian and Hittite architectural influences on Mycenaean building, pp. 60–61; the Egyptian pharaonic context, 65–73, to name a few). It seems, at least as far as the chapter on Mycenae is concerned and with which I am most familiar, that no research into the topic of labour costing or social interpretations of these Mycenaean monuments has been included beyond 2005; some earlier crucial works which are directly relevant or contextually important are not cited.¹ It is also a pity that similar works from the classical period which are relevant to the discussion of prehistoric monumental works of the same region are not included either.

Overall, the book reads smoothly and informs especially the non-specialist of an often overlooked aspect of the socio-economic value of the processes of building in action, both in past contexts (i.e. Mycenae), their repurposing and shifts of meaning (i.e. obelisks), as well as in more recent times (i.e. trulli repairs). The book is beautifully illustrated with both black and white and colour photographs, though some are perhaps less relevant: p. 56, fig 36. Instead, a photograph of the children carrying their miniature versions of monuments in the parades (as referred to in the text) would have been a better choice.

Leiden

Ann Brysbaert

*

Norbert Kunisch: *Funde aus Milet*. Teil 3: Die attische Importkeramik. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter 2016. X, 221 S. 130 Taf. 15 Beil. 4°. (Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahr 1899. 5.).

Norbert Kunisch (im Folgenden K.) hat mit der Vorlage der attischen, figürlich bemalten Importkeramik aus Milet eine große Lücke gefüllt. Noch immer ist unsere Kenntnis der Verbreitung und Verwendung attischer Keramik an der kleinasiatischen Küste und in deren Hinterland unvollständig. Umso willkommener ist dieses gewichtige Opus, das nach vielen, jährlichen Kampagnen vor Ort – Arbeitsbeginn war 1992 – die figürliche Keramik präsentiert,² die attische Schwarzfirnisware soll folgen. Der wissenschaftlichen Öffentlichkeit vorgestellt werden die Funde aus den Grabungen zwischen 1955 und 2009. Diese stammen aus unterschiedlichen Bereichen der antiken Stadt mit unterschiedlichen Befundlagen (S. 2–3), aus klar definierten Schichten auf dem Kalabaktepe oder immer wieder umgelagerten Schuttschichten am Zeytintepe und einer «... insgesamt diffusen undsituation im Bereich des hellenistisch-römischen Stadtgebietes» (S. 3). Es handelt sich um Keramik aus Heiligtum, Wohnquartier bzw. Stadtgebiet.

Vertreten sind an Gefäßformen vor allem Trinkgefäße – und hier in erster Linie Schalen – sowie Mischgefäße (Lebetes und Kratere); Kannen sind deutlich weniger erhalten, ebenso geschlossene Gefäße (vor allem Amphoren). Besonders auffällig ist die Menge an Kelchpyxiden. Chronologisch decken die Fragmente die

¹ Cavanagh and Mee 1999. 'The Treasury of Atreus'; R.D. Fitzsimons 2011. 'Monumental Architecture and the Construction of the Mycenaean State'. In N. Terrenato and D. C. Hagis (eds), 'State Formation in Italy and Greece. Questioning the Neoevolutionist Paradigm', Oxford, 75–118; M. Devolder 2013. 'Construire en Crète Minoenne. Une Approche Énergétique d'el'Architecture Néopalatiale'. Leuven: work on labour costing on Crete; A. Brysbaert 2013. 'Set in Stone? Socio-economic reflections on human and animal resources in monumental architecture of Late Bronze Age Tiryns in the Argos Plain, Greece'. *Arctos* 47: 49–96.

² Vollständig ist das Corpus offensichtlich nicht; s. 66 und 67 Anm. 435.