In the most thorough study yet of the Lelantine war, Victor Parker (P) shows an ability to read texts closely and an awareness of the limits of inference which make it clearer than ever before what might, and what may not, be believed about an episode over which there exists no current scholarly consensus. In two respects, however, this work is deficient: the effective 1992 cut-off date for scholarly bibliography, the date of the Heidelberg thesis on which this monograph is based, is not only in principle unacceptably early for a book sent to the publisher in 1996 (date of preface), it means that P is seriously under-informed about the archaeology of the north Aegean and of the west; and the failure to come to terms with the claims of those working on the invention of tradition (neither Jan Vansina’s general work1 nor Rosalind Thomas’s work on Athens2 are mentioned) means that P never defends the foundations of his enterprise against the most dangerous attack on them.

P opens with a treatment of the sources, which is primarily directed against the ultra-scepticism of Detlev Fehling’s paper ‘Zwei Lehrstücke über Pseudo-Nachrichten (Homeriden, Lelantischer Krieg)’ (RhM 122 [1979], 193-210), which P has little difficulty in seeing off. Readers would have been helped had P collected all the ancient sources first, rather than introducing them one by one, but the conclusion he reaches—that there was no single ancient tradition about the war—is well established.

1 See e.g. Jan Vansina Oral Tradition as History (Madison, 1985).

2 See e.g. Rosalind Thomas Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens (Cambridge, 1989).
Chapters 2 and 3 introduce the archaeological evidence, first that from Euboia and then that from areas settled by Euboians. P is prepared to dispute the general interpretation of 'events' known from archaeology (e.g. the burning of Xeropolis in c.700, 38) but never discusses the archaeological data itself (so there is no discussion of archaeological dating), and statements by archaeologists are taken over as facts (e.g. Coldstream's archaeological date for the Corinthian colony on Corcyra, 57).

P argues against the identification of 'Old Eretria' with Amarynthos, and favours the view that Lefkandi Xeropolis was old Eretria. P's treatment of Euboian 'colonisation' of the Chalkidike has effectively been superseded by the recent work at Torone of which he appears unaware (50 states that there has been no systematic archaeology in the Chalkidike), and by the debate which John Papadopoulos has initiated on the basis of that work (see *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 15 [1996] and *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* [1997] together with Simon Hornblower's response in *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 16 [1997]). His treatment of Pithekousai seems to have been written in ignorance of even the 1984 Italian edition of David Ridgway's 1992 *The First Western Greeks*, let alone the appearance of the first volume of the definitive publication of the site. He uses 'Kolonie' of Pithekousai (52) as if that were unproblematic (important discussions now in *AION* n.s.1 [1994]). The web of assumptions that enables P to move from parallels between coins from Karystos and coins from Corcyra (both have a cow and calf motif) to affirming the historicity of the claim that there was an Eretrian colony on Corcyra displaced by Corinthians (56), is never untangled. Had P entertained the possibility that Euboians might have settled abroad without 'state'-organised 'colonisation', the whole basis of his link between settlement abroad and war at home would have had to be re-examined.

The central and most valuable chapter of the book is on the dating of the war. P's discussion of the dating of Archilochus supersedes all previous discussions: he concludes that all the
poems that can be securely dated belong to the decade 655-45, and that Archilochus is good evidence that there was war in Euboia still going on in these years. Surprisingly, P does not rise to the equivalent challenge over the date of Hesiod, where all he is prepared to say is that the contemporaneity of Hesiod and Amphidamas (who is not a king for P because Plutarch does not call him 'king') shows 'dass der Krieg in der Frühzeit stattfand'. P bases his date for the beginning of the war largely on archaeological arguments (the early seventh-century defensive wall at Eretria and the hero cult at tombs there beginning at a similar period), his date for the end largely on there being no further evidence for active hostilities after Archilochus. He therefore posits some 60 years of warfare from c.710 to c.650.

The nature of that warfare is discussed in chapter 5, the possible non-Euboian participants in chapter 6. P suggests that the war belongs to the period when hoplite warfare is experimental and swords rather than spears are being used (the Euboian spearmen of the catalogue of ships he would make a late seventh-century passage). He favours horses being only for transport in seventh-century warfare (apart from Thessalians). P resists the more extravagant claims about the allies of Eretria and Chalkis involved in the war and restricts his possible participants to Samos, Miletos, Corinth, Megara and the Thessalians. It is perhaps in this chapter above all that P's failure to consider the construction of tradition becomes problematic. Like claims about the foundation of cities abroad, there were many circumstances in which claims to past cooperation in warfare might be constructed by cities for their mutual benefit. P comes close to admitting that what sources say about cities' behaviour may not be true (e.g. 'Trotz der Wortwahl Herodots glaube ich, dass die Milesier, sobald sie Samos besiegten, den Eretriern recht wenig geholfen haben', 133), without seeing how far that undermines his general method.

The last two short chapters review the origins of the war (rather unprofitably; close analysis of the archaeology both of
Euboia and of Greek activity in the west might have yielded real progress), and its result (Chalkis won).

Readers who need to be told (n.373) when democracy began in Athens are unlikely to flock to this book, but for any scholar who works on the period 750-600 P's well-indexed monograph will become required reading. That said, nothing P says here convinces me that this war demands much more than passing reference in any general history of archaic Greece.

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