G. Pikoulas, *Τὸ ὁδικὸ δίκτυο τῆς Λακωνικῆς*. (Ἡ μεγάλη βιβλιοθήκη.) Athens: Horos, 2012. (With a contribution by G. Oikonomos.) Pp. 688; 16 colour plates; CD-ROM and map in pockets. ISBN 9789608569157 (ISSN 11052163). €95.85.

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By kind invitation of the Editors, I take this opportunity to comment on a substantial monograph on the road network of Lakonike (Laconia and Messenia), excluding Sparta itself, of which I have received a copy from the author.

Giannis Pikoulas has made the field of ancient roads in southern Greece very much his own. His previous contributions on this topic include his doctoral thesis on the southern territory of Megalopolis, containing a section on the road network;[1] a book on roads and fortifications in the north-eastern Peloponnese;[2] and a long chapter on the roads of Arkadia.[3] His key discovery has been that artificial roadways were much more numerous and formed a much denser network than was previously realized. The roads in question are identified by parallel grooves or 'ruts'—not worn by traffic but deliberately carved, and spaced apart at a standard gauge of c.1.40 m (though see pp. 40–3, 595)—which, somewhat like modern tram-lines, will have stabilized a vehicle's progress across rocky, especially steep, ground. Pikoulas's work is widely acknowledged to be a major addition to our understanding of connectivity in mainland Greece. Others have built on his efforts, such as Klaus Tausend[4] and Giannis Lolos.[5]

The present work, the fruit of thirty years' labour, opens with an introduction reminding readers of the character of the evidence and earlier scholarship on the subject, and of the 'café (*kapheneion*) method' of local investigation successfully deployed by Pikoulas over many years (cf. 589–90).

Chapter 2 is an extensive catalogue of archaeological and historical data, in which Lakonike is divided into four zones: the north (54–136, sites 1–20), with four main routes connecting Sparta to Tegea, the Aigytis, and the Dentheliatis; the east (137–287, sites 21–48), with six main routes and many branch routes, involving Kynouria, Parnon, and especially Geronthrai (mod. *Geráki*); the south (288–391, sites 49–86), with ten main routes, covering the Eurotas valley and the Malea and Tainaron peninsulas; and, in less detail, the west (392–435, sites 87–100), with four main routes, all in eastern and southern Messenia. A useful list of localities (numbered 1–100 but totalling 128 if one counts branch routes) is given at the start of the catalogue (49–52) rather than in the volume's table of contents, but without page numbers. Of the 100 routes, 92 are deemed certain and 8 probable (590 & n. 520). Almost every entry includes a clear map with contours and relief shading; where applicable, positions fixed by GPS are indicated, as is the likely course of a road. Not all entries refer to material remains identified by Pikoulas, or indeed to extant remains; some are based on older reports or on oral information that it was not possible to verify.

The lengthy synthesis in Chapter 3 opens with discussions of the routes in relation to settlements, landscapes, and history (north, 447–59; east, 459–80; south, 480–92; west, 492–502). After important methodological remarks on bridges (503–5) and mountain paths (506–7), and a catalogue of ancient settlement names (509–13), Pikoulas discusses the date of the network (515–42) and its post-classical history (542–66, with remarks on Livy's account of Flamininus's movements at 558–61 and on the Tabula Peutingeriana at 562–4). Three historical campaigns are reassessed in the light of the new reconstructions (567–86): Agis II's route in 418 (570–3), those of the Thebans and their allies in 370/69 (573–84), and the topography of the Sellasia campaign of 222 (584–6).

After concluding reflections (587–96), we find nine Appendixes (597–644). The first eight present new field data for Oion (599–600) and Pellana (601); a revision of views on the Kopanos bridge (602–5) and the battle of Sellasia (606–13); and evidence for canalized tributaries of the Eurotas north of Sparta (614–21), hellenistic forts in south-western Parnon (622–30), and aqueducts at Asopos

(631–3; hellenistic?) and Selinous (634–5). Finally (636–44), G. Oikonomou reports the results of scientific tests on stones from structures at *Vordónia* (cf. 617 n. 568) and *Geráki*.

The handsomely produced volume concludes with an extensive bibliography, a glossary, indexes of sources and place-names, a four-page summary in English (685–8), and 32 colour photographs on 16 plates. In the back pocket is a large composite map (prepared by Penelope Matsouka) with the routes clearly marked. In the front pocket, following Tausend's example, Pikoulas includes a CD-ROM containing 277 further photographs with captions (gathered into two PDFs, one with low- and one with high-resolution versions). Users will find it helpful to keep one of these files open while consulting the catalogue, which regularly cross-refers both to the printed plates and to these electronic images.

Not the least of Pikoulas's contributions is to have highlighted (e.g. 12) the progressive destruction of data in the landscape owing to mechanized agriculture and construction—including, ironically, the improvement of roads—as well as the loss of collective memories on the part of many rural communities (e.g. 26–7). Those that retain inherited knowledge of interactions with the landscape tend, necessarily, to feature more prominently in the dataset. The most compelling example is Geronthrai, in whose territory no fewer than thirteen routes are identified (map at 287).

The volume will be indispensable for any future work on Laconian topography. As well as numerous revisions of, and corrections to, earlier scholars' work (including my own), Pikoulas has thoroughly re-examined a number of particular questions. To give just one example: his discussion of the hitherto enigmatic bridge at *Xirokámbi* (late hellenistic–early Roman) now shows conclusively that it served a route into, and probably across, Mt Taÿgetos, not a road to Gytheion (409–11).

Those with limited modern Greek should not be satisfied with reading the English abstract; it will be worth their effort to read Pikoulas's concluding reflections (587–96), where he summarizes his views and arguments in more detail. They should also engage with his main analysis (515–66), where he defends against criticisms his earlier views, such as that the road network was basically in place by the end of the archaic period (542; at 528 he recalls the kings' responsibility for roads, Hdt. 6. 57. 4) and that its scale and the cost of its upkeep presuppose an initiative by a powerful central authority—namely Sparta as head of the Peloponnesian alliance. He reiterates his earlier qualifications to these points—qualifications that some critics appear to have overlooked—such as that different states will have had responsibility for their own roads (e.g. 527) and that roads were not built solely for military purposes (e.g. 526), not least because the political aims behind rapid army movements included facilitating other kinds of communication; trade generally followed the flag (e.g. 594, 686). Pikoulas views the technical know-how underpinning the roads as having come to Sparta from the Near East and been disseminated from there—such technical advances cannot be monopolized (527).

Ultimately, the importance of this complex study does not depend on accepting these positions; nor is it limited to the reconstruction of the routes. Pikoulas has provided invaluable material for a better understanding of the internal dynamics of Laconia and eastern Messenia. His work also embodies a deeply felt, personal tribute to the landscapes and peoples of the south-eastern Peloponnese, both present and past.

(689–706) Εἰκόνες.

NOTES
[[1]] <i>Ἡ νότια μεγαλοπολίτικη χώρα: ἀπό τόν 8ο π.Χ. ὥς τόν 4ο μ.Χ. αἰώνα</i> (Athina, 1988), esp. 198–227.

[[2]] <i>Ὁδικὸ δίκτυο καὶ ἄμυνα: ἀπὸ τὴν Κόρινθο στὸ Ἄργος καὶ τὴν Ἀρκαδία</i> (Athina, 1995).

[[3]] 'The road-network of Arkadia', in T. H. Nielsen and J. Roy (eds), <i>Defining Ancient Arkadia</i> (Copenhagen, 1999), 248–319 (with map 3 at end of vol.). See also, <i>inter alia</i>, 'Travelling by land in ancient Greece', in C. E. P. Adams and J. Roy (eds), <i>Travel, Geography and Culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East</i> (Oxford, 2007), 78–87; 'The routes', in M. Georgopoulou <i>et al</i>., <i>Following Pausanias: The Quest for Greek Antiquity</i> (New Castle, Del./Athens, 2007), 196–7 (map at 197).

[[4]] <i>Verkehrswege der Argolis: Rekonstruktion und historische Bedeutung</i> (Berlin, 2006), appraised by the present reviewer in <i>BMCR</i> 2008.03.40.

[[5]] <i>Land of Sikyon: Archaeology and History of a Greek City-state<i> (Princeton, NJ, 2011). See <i>BMCR</i> 2012.04.60; maps at <u n=http://dx.doi.org/10.2972/978-0-87661-539-3-1</u> and adjacent addresses (change last digit to 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6).