

FOXHALL (L.), GEHRKE (H.J.) and LURAGHI (N.) Eds. **Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece**. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010. Pp. 360. €62. 9783515096836.
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This collection of 17 essays with accompanying introduction focuses on the representation of the past in the ancient Greek world, from the Archaic to the Roman Imperial period. It is organized chronologically, ending with a single essay on Han China (N. Di Cosmo) and two discussions of the relationship between ancient and modern concepts of the past (J. Grethlein; K. Vlassopoulos). The volume is particularly interesting for the way that it avoids a narrow generic focus on ‘historiography’, offering a much broader analysis of Greek representations of the past, including Archaic poetry, tragedy, epigraphy and visual media like vase-painting, architectural sculpture and coinage. This will not only make it attractive to a wider range of readers, but intellectually valuable in the proposal that it makes about what constitutes ‘historical’ representation.

The central concern of the volume is how representations of the past are shaped by the concerns of the present, with political effect. As noted by J. Grethlein (327), this approach is particularly important in that ‘the positivist question of what actually took place is replaced by the investigation of the beliefs that members of a society hold about their past’, and in that it ‘directs the focus on the socio-political function of memory’. This is therefore an extremely welcome and much needed contribution. However, the term coined to describe this approach, ‘intentional history’, needs some explanation: the word ‘intentional’ might be expected to suggest a concern with the self-conscious ‘intentions’ of the producers of historical representation. This would be problematic. More often than not such ‘intentions’ are not available to us. We can analyse how particular forms of representation function and what that tells us about ways of thinking at that time; whether those representational effects are ‘intentional’ or not can only be a matter for speculation.

A problem for the volume is that no sustained attempt to explain and justify the use of the word ‘intentional’ is provided. It seems, however, that it is not meant to be understood with its usual meaning. The term ‘intentional history’ follows earlier work by H.-J. Gehrke (‘Myth, history, and collective identity: uses of the past in ancient

Greece and beyond’, in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian’s Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, Oxford, 2001, 286–313); here he defines it as ‘social knowledge of the past, in other words that which a society knows and hold for true about its past’ (286). Gehrke’s chapter in the current volume (15–16) links his approach to Husserlian phenomenology and the work of the German anthropologist Wilhelm Mühlmann, who used the language of ‘intentionality’ to describe how anthropological data are shaped by the cultural preconceptions of the group from which they originate (‘intentional data’). As I understand it, in this context ‘intentional’ does not necessarily suggest self-conscious ‘deliberateness’, as it does in conventional language. Gehrke explains that according to Mühlmann’s concept of intentionality, group identity depends on ‘an attitude or a feeling, conscious or subconscious ... on which one has reflected or which one has accepted unquestioningly during the process of socialisation’ (16). However, this understanding of the term does not seem to be upheld consistently. In contrast, the definition of intentional history presented in the volume’s introduction (L. Foxhall and N. Luraghi) stresses self-consciousness (‘the projection in time of the elements of a subjective, self-conscious self categorization’, 9). This appears to point us towards the more conventional meaning of ‘intentional’, with its associated difficulties.

A further problem is the delimitation of the material which ‘intentional history’ is used to define. The very production of a term for a ‘type’ of history implies that some sorts of historical representation will find themselves excluded from its remit, and indeed the introduction suggests that ‘there can be no intentional history without unintentional history’ (10): ‘frameworks of “fixed points” in the past serve as a foundation of belief in the truth of the past ... Without such beliefs it would be pointless to invent or manipulate tradition’ (9). Gehrke similarly suggests that ‘authors whom we consider to be founding fathers of history and historiography move away from intentional history’ (25). He illustrates this by reference to Thucydides’ rewriting of the Tyrannicides story, which we are told indicates his role as a ‘destroyer of legends’ and his ‘distancing ... from traditional forms of representation of the past’ (25). Yet surely this example could be used to argue quite the opposite – that the retelling of the past is *always* informed by present concerns (cf. J. Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*, Princeton, 2001, 53–54)? Historical

representation cannot but be shaped in some way by the concerns and preconceptions of the culture that produced it. The introduction suggests that “intentional history” is never history in a vacuum’ (9); but *no* history is history in a vacuum.

Ultimately, though, these criticisms are only relevant to the theoretical overview of the book, since the essays presented in the rest of the volume are largely untouched by these problems. For lack of space I pick out just a few, although many more are worth mentioning. L. Giuliani (‘Myth as past? On the temporal aspect of Greek depictions of legend’) considers whether the past could be marked iconographically in Archaic vase-painting, so that paintings of contemporary life could be distinguished visually from images of heroic time. He argues that there are no such ‘sign-posts’ of time, that the heroic past was not perceived as radically ‘other’ but as part of a continuum with the present, and that there is a greater concern in vase-painting to mark ethnic otherness than otherness of time. M. Giangiulio (‘Collective identities, imagined past, and Delphi’) argues that accounts of oracular pronouncements from Delphi and stories about the Delphic Oracle’s involvement in Archaic history must be understood not as originating in Delphi itself but in the communities to which the oracles refer, where Delphic traditions formed part of the imagined past of those communities, stressing their religious and political prestige. J. Skinner (‘Fish heads and mussel-shells: visualizing Greek identity’) examines images on Greek coins, considering how they shaped the collective identities of those cities which issued them, and helped them position themselves against other Greek and non-Greek communities. S. Lambert’s essay (‘Connecting with the past in Lykourgan Athens: an epigraphic perspective’), for me a highlight of the volume, discusses Athenian public inscriptions from the late fourth century, often read as a time of lost confidence following Chaironeia. He argues that the inscriptions’ repeated references to the era of the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath work to claim a connection with Athens’ more successful past, as well as reminding their audiences of previous moments when Athens had recovered from defeat. He considers how the inscriptions function as monuments, set up in the charged political space of the Acropolis, at a time when there was an increased need to remember this particular construct of the past. Last but not least, J. Grethlein (‘Beyond intentional history: a phenomenological model of the idea of history’), through a sensitive discussion of the meeting of Diomedes and Glaukos in the

Iliad, suggests that a concern with chance and how it might be overcome pervades the ancient Greek concept of historical memory.

The political and cultural embeddedness of Greek historical representation is an important subject in need of study; despite the problems of the volume’s theoretical frame, these essays are a valuable contribution to intellectual history.

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GRAY (V.J.) **Xenophon’s Mirror of Princes: Reading the Reflections.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 406. £83. 97801-99563814.

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There have been a variety of opinions regarding Xenophon and his works over the centuries. In antiquity, he was admired by Cicero, who translated the *Oeconomicus*, and in the early modern period, Machiavelli was also more interested in Xenophon than any other ancient thinker. In the 19th century, on the other hand, Xenophon was regarded in a less positive light, both as a historian and a philosopher, a view which has carried weight to the present in some circles. In the middle of the 20th century, however, Leo Strauss developed the argument that Xenophon’s works were deeply ironic, and that one had to ‘read between the lines’ in order to understand his true meaning (for example ‘The spirit of Sparta or the taste of Xenophon’, *Social Research* 6.4, 1939, 502–36). It is these ‘darker readings’ which are the object of attack in Gray’s new book on Xenophon. Gray herself is a key contributor to recent Xenophonic studies, and in this monograph she makes the case for Xenophon’s importance as a writer and political commentator, but bases her arguments on ‘surface readings’ of Xenophon, which do not allow for Xenophon to be ironic, unless he indicates clearly that is what he intends to be.

Gray argues that across his numerous texts, Xenophon’s main political agenda is to develop a theory of leadership, and to set out a positive image of the relationship between leaders and followers. He does this, according to Gray, through a variety of techniques, but primarily through developing sequences of what she has called ‘patterned narratives’, which engage intertextually with earlier works, and especially Homer