

*Greek History*

‘Oh, the polis, the polis’, Martin West recently exclaimed (in *BMCR* 00.09.22) – mocking, I suppose, the way in which this concept has been invested with ever-deeper meanings and invoked as a necessary and sufficient explanation of just about everything Greek. He has a point. It makes a nice change, then, to come across a book arguing that the *polis* was not as dominant in Athenian life and thought as we have come to believe. Edward E. Cohen’s <sup>B\*\*</sup>*The Athenian Nation*<sup>1</sup> begins by pointing out that Herodotus (1.57, 59; 4.99; 7.161) repeatedly referred to the Athenians as an *ethnos* as well as a *polis* (28), which serves to remind us that Athens was not only a political community of adult male citizens, but also a social, economic, and religious community encompassing the entire population of Attica, male and female, native and immigrant, free and slave. A self-evident truth, but one occasionally in danger of being forgotten. C. goes on to make the controversial claim that within this wider ‘nation’ the political community of citizens was far less exclusive than we imagine. In order to qualify for Athenian citizenship, after Pericles, both of one’s parents had to be *astoi*, ‘townsfolk’. Most scholars regard *astoi* as a synonym for ‘citizens’ (*politai*), but C. believes that it is a much broader category of ‘local residents’ which included all metic immigrants who had become ‘assimilated’ (57 n. 55) to the point of being ‘physically and culturally indistinguishable from the mass of the *politai*’ (72–3). If this is true, the second generation of ‘acculturated’ immigrants (75) had as much right to citizenship as the sons of ‘native’ families, and Athens was quite an open society. This striking claim is only tenable if metics were indeed regarded as *astoi*, which, despite C.’s best efforts, remains a moot point. One text (Thucydides 4.94.1 with 90.1) does appear to include metics – all metics, not just assimilated ones – among the *astoi* (55–6). Two other texts cited in support by C., however, actually separate metics from ‘townsfolk’: Xenophon speaks of metics ‘serving alongside the *astoi*’ in the army (*Poroi* 2.2–3), which implies that they are not *astoi* themselves; even more clearly, the Old Oligarch says that ‘we have given an equal right of speech to slaves and free men, to metics and *astoi*’ (1.12). A reference to metics in Aristophanes as ‘the chaff of the *astoi*’ is misleadingly translated as ‘the useless *part of the astoi*’ (*Acharnians* 508), when the metaphor is meant to suggest that they are neither truly foreigners nor fully ‘locals’. It is also misleadingly asserted that in Sophocles Oedipus is simultaneously called an *astos* and a metic, when in fact he calls *himself* a ‘new townsman’, but is regarded by the natives as ‘a foreign metic’ (*xenos metoikos*; *O.T.* 222, 452). Evidently, the meaning of the term is a matter of perspective and context. It remains likely, therefore, that in the context of citizenship rights *astos* was used in its most restricted meaning, as a synonym of *politês*. If it had been used in the wider sense, one would have expected litigants in court to have spent a great deal of time disparaging the level of ‘acculturation’ of their opponents’ parents, rather than confine themselves to arguing over their juridical status as citizens, metics, or slaves. C.’s scenario, in which immigrants either become wholly assimilated and ‘routinely’ win citizenship for their children (77) or remain so ‘blatantly non-Hellenic’ (71) and ‘blatantly unqualified’ (77) that they do not even bother to apply, is surely quite unrealistic. Subsequent chapters offer further challenges to common ideas about Athenian society, including the suggestion that even at the level of the deme (let alone at the level of the ‘nation’) Athens was not a face-to-face society, and that the lack of close social controls contributed to its open, fluid nature (Ch. 4), which allowed slaves much greater economic, social, and indeed legal, independence than scholars recognize (Ch. 5). These arguments, too, are stimulating

and potentially important, but again C. subjects the sources to occasional rough handling. With a final chapter limply tackling the supposedly prominent belief that adult male citizens ‘wantonly exploited sexually’ the rest of the population (159), the nicely built-up iconoclastic momentum grinds to a sudden halt. The book cries out for a substantial conclusion reassessing the nature of the Athenian community, but C. seems to have run out of steam. Not surprising really, given that his scholarly work competes with a day-job as CEO of Resource America, Inc., and – if I interpret the dedication correctly – the demands of seven children. There is a link here somewhere to Graham Shipley’s <sup>B\*</sup>*The Greek World after Alexander*,<sup>2</sup> which features a brief glimpse of a giant golden phallus. The thing, in case you are wondering, was carted around Alexandria at the behest of Ptolemy II (Athenaeus 210f) as part of a procession ‘no doubt intended to demonstrate . . . his power, and to emphasize the stability and continuity of his dynasty’ (68). Indeed. Unlike your reviewer, S. does not try to get cheap laughs out of the mine-is-bigger-than-yours mentality which also spawned those monstrous warships and siege engines of the Hellenistic period, but offers a serious attempt to understand the age on its own terms. (Not even he, however, can resist poking fun [241–2] at the kind of scholarship represented by Aristophanes of Byzantium’s *On Words Suspected Of Not Being Used By The Early Writers*.) Switching fluently back and forth between the histories of the main states and dynasties and the history of political, religious, intellectual, and cultural structures, S. takes apart many a cliché about the period, such as the notion that it marked the decline of the city-state (‘It was the Roman conquest, not the Macedonian, which altered the nature of the *polis*’, 368) and sparked a crisis of faith (which is probably no more than a retrojection of ‘a twentieth-century anxiety’, 176). Cultural changes are associated instead with the changing position of city-elites, now more powerful within their communities, but less powerful in the world outside (esp. 192). The precise nature of these connections, and the role in the process of new elites at the royal courts, might perhaps have been explained more fully, but the approach seems fruitful, and it is good to have a textbook that is both prepared to analyse broad structural changes and able to do so in a clear and balanced manner. Readers looking for dynastic intrigue and royal gossip should buy a tabloid instead, but everyone else will find a great deal of interest in its 399 pages of text, enlivened by translated source passages and a good number of illustrations, and 169 pages of appendices, notes, bibliography, and indices. Just to show that I have been paying attention, I will note one of the rare slips made along the way: the Athenian tribes and council had been unchanged for two centuries before the reforms of 307 B.C., not three (121). A more serious complaint is that a couple of sentences on the *sarissa* (114) and a section on the technology of siege- and naval warfare (334–41) hardly constitute the full-scale ‘appraisal of the momentous military . . . changes’ promised in the blurb and surely crucial to an understanding of the period. Otherwise, this ‘comprehensive and well-researched study’ is all it claims to be, and adds impressively to the already heavyweight *Routledge History of the Ancient World*. As if in compensation for the short shrift given to Hellenistic war, the study of classical warfare gets two shots in the arm with the almost simultaneous appearance of two studies which, each in its own way, are quite remarkable. One is a new edition of Morrison and Coates’s <sup>B\*</sup>*The Athenian Trireme*.<sup>3</sup> The first edition came out when the project of reconstructing an ancient trireme was still in its early stages. Since then, the *Olympias* has famously been completed and subjected to several seasons of sea-trials, so that a revised version of

the book is very welcome. Apart from a number of additional illustrations, the main new feature is a substantial and instructive chapter by rowing-master Boris Rankov, reporting on what the trials have taught us. The intolerable smell of sweat in the ship's hold, the urgent need for ventilation and vast quantities of water on board (238), the difficulty of co-ordinating strokes (best resolved by blowing a tin whistle or collectively humming Pachelbel's Canon in D, 251), and the impact of training on speed and manoeuvrability (259–6) are only some of the fascinating results to emerge. Why the *Olympias* could never quite reach the rowing speeds implied by the sources is still something of a mystery. One partial explanation, however, so good that it might have been invented by a privatized rail company, is that the designers used the wrong kind of cubit (245–6). The other study is Lawrence A. Tritle's heartfelt and inspiring <sup>B\*</sup>*From Melos to My Lai*,<sup>4</sup> which looks to the ancient Greek experience of war in order to illuminate the American experience in Vietnam. A veteran of that war himself, T.'s agenda is to show 'how a generation of Americans was deceived in almost criminal fashion and exposed to horrific situations of violence in which they were both its agents and objects' (201), and in particular to demonstrate that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), far from being an imaginary illness, as some would have it, has affected soldiers ever since antiquity (198). In approach the book is much like its acknowledged inspiration, Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam* (1994), but it covers a wider range of aspects of warfare – including political decision-making, the fate of waiting wives and families, and the commemoration of the dead – as well as a wider range of sources. Of particular interest to the ancient historian are the argument that beneath the veneer of Greek heroic and agonistic ideals lay a more brutal reality (Ch. 3), the suggestion that several characters in Greek literature and history, above all Xenophon's Clearchus, show the effects of combat trauma (Ch. 4), and the exploration of parallels between ancient and modern war memorials (Ch. 9). At times T. perhaps reads more into the sources than their authors intended: did the elderly Spartan in Tyrtaeus (F 10) really have his genitals cut off and placed in his hands by an enemy 'as a sort of macabre joke' (40, 65), or was he merely clutching a wound? Do the cheeks of the captured Stranger in Euripides' *Bacchae* look 'flushed as though with wine' (ll. 436–9) because the poet realized 'that in times of stress the body went through certain physiological changes' (8), or because the Stranger was in fact the god of wine? T. also relies rather too heavily on the assumption that there are certain universals in human biology and psychology. There are of course parallels between modern soldiers haunted by 'survivor-guilt' and the survivors of Thermopylae who were driven to suicide by a sense of shame: both emotions are evidently within 'the predictable range of responses' dictated by 'human chemistry' (131). But the fact remains that they are different emotions and are as such clearly culturally determined: it is hardly legitimate to conclude that the Spartans felt devastated 'really because of the guilt', rather than the shame (76). As a study of Greek warfare, then, this book has some weaknesses as well as notable strengths, but it would be a mistake to judge it primarily as a work of ancient history. Ultimately, it is a personal, and often moving, testimony to the suffering which results from war, and a warning against 'the danger . . . that future generations will be left unprepared for the consequences of war and violence' (198). If all is fair in war, as they say, one should certainly be allowed to take a few small liberties in the quest for peace.

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## NOTES

1. *The Athenian Nation*. By Edward E. Cohen. Princeton U.P., 2000. Pp. xx + 250. £25.00.
2. *The Greek World after Alexander 323–30 BC*. Routledge History of the Ancient World. By Graham Shipley. Routledge, London and New York, 2000. Pp. xxxi + 568, with 61 figures. Paper £19.99.
3. *The Athenian Trireme*. The History and Reconstruction of an Ancient Greek Warship. By J. S. Morrison, J. F. Coates and N. B. Rankov. Cambridge U.P., 2nd edition, 2000. Pp. xxviii + 319, with 85 illustrations and 15 maps. Hardback £40.00, paperback 14.95.
4. *From Melos to My Lai*. War and Survival. By Lawrence A. Tritle. Routledge, London and New York, 2000. Pp. xv + 220, with 18 plates. Hardback £40.00, paperback £13.99.

*Roman History*

Publishers are scrolling their lists for potential paperbacks, straight reprints, reissues with additional material or corrigenda, and real revised editions. Buyers need to consider whether (for example) to replace existing copies or not, or to fill a gap on their shelves with something essentially quite old. Given this mix, I shall be chronological, and my first is a valuable novelty. Christer Bruun, noting relative neglect of the Middle Republic, has edited contributions to his conference at the Finnish Institute as **\*\*The Roman Middle Republic: Politics, Religion, and Historiography c. 400–133 B.C.** (not all in English).<sup>1</sup> Rightly he boasts that scholars responsible for recent advance were participants. It is invidious to mention four of fourteen papers, but readers will wish to know of M. Torelli, whose exploration of the chapel inscribed *G. Genucio Clousino prai* is a *tour de force*, P. Coarelli, T. J. Cornell, and T. P. Wiseman, whose paper on Liber, like K. Sandberg's provocative study of legislative activity, carries the banner of popular politics. They exemplify the stress laid on the contribution of material evidence to historiography (generous and clear illustrations). Inevitably coverage is sporadic; readers will regret only a long-term plan permitting areas of study to be separated, but there are limits to what can be expected even of the Institute. In fact we also have second-century historians (G. Forsythe), spirited defence of Livy on the Hannibalic War (R. T. Ridley), and Polybius for once winning a rebuke (J. E. Vaahtera), neither quite dispelling preconceptions, Bruun's unpicking of Camillus stories, J. von Ungern-Sternberg on reworking the Gallic sack, K.-J. Hölkeskamp's on *fides* at the core of Roman political activity, and J. C. Saint-Hilaire on citizen rights and the trials of the Scipios. Unexpectedly M. Humm's ingenious interlocking of calendar and tribal reform proved most diverting to this reader. This volume is essential for college libraries to possess, and scholars to know. We jump now to two volumes by A. R. Birley making welcome reappearances: <sup>B\*</sup>*Marcus Aurelius: a Biography*<sup>2</sup> in reprint and <sup>B\*</sup>*Hadrian: the Restless Emperor*<sup>3</sup> in paperback with nearly a page of additional notes. Both are core reading for the second century, making sense of disparate and patchy material and, one hopes, popularizing that hinge century among students. *Marcus* survived an unfriendly notice<sup>4</sup> deploring excess of campaigning and not enough on intellectual and religious aspects of the reign, notably the 'Second Sophistic', to emerge as the classic account. *Hadrian*, appearing so recently, demands attention. Its twenty-one chapters, briefer at first, are chronologically based, as one would expect in a declared biography with no intention of offering *Times* as well as *Life*

(xiv; the 'Second Sophistic' occurs twice in the index, once for a bibliographical note; law not at all). However, they also make the book easy to consult on particular themes. It is well illustrated, especially from coins (enlarged), the maps clear. Concentration on the foreground brings out Hadrian's political isolation, the drive for hellenism and its tragic consequences in Judaea. It is compensated for, and the book enriched, by the author's sensitivity (akin to his subject's) to connections running through time and space: to Gades and Spain generally, for example (12; 21–6); to an earlier Hadrianus (206). Birley is convincing on Hadrian's succession plans, but metaphorical language (3) leaves it unclear if the heir was intended to stand aside for Marcus, or just to die.

Birley heralds M. T. Boatwright's <sup>B\*\*</sup>*Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*<sup>5</sup> as a colossal undertaking. It carries a scholar already known for her contribution to the architectural and social history of Hadrian's reign outwards from Rome. I use the word 'scholar' advisedly: the author's care makes this a book for confident reference. There is an overriding problem of interpretation, noted at once (11): how much can we attribute to Hadrian himself? His activities, religious, and incorporating the past, 209 (his day was not unique in treating religion as integral to politics, 143) bring her down on Hadrian's side, but what he did was in part a response to what had been done before – or omitted – and to local initiatives and petitions. Nor should one attribute too much to the long-term success of cities in areas he favoured (Asia, central Italy, North Africa) to Hadrian (207, but cf. 204). From a discussion of cities and Roman power Boatwright goes on to the sources, then to two chapters on changes of status affecting city life, governance, and economy. Benefactions with extra-mural effects are followed by physical changes to cities' fabric. The work is not 'colossal' because three prime cases, Athens, Smyrna, and Italica, are examined, and the level of physical detail is necessarily limited. Finally come city foundations, new and renewed. Proper caution and the author's thoroughness occasionally give the text a list-like quality. The endpaper maps (vulnerable to librarians) and eighteen illustrations provide graphic help, but are not uniformly clear. This informative work will re-emerge, and the illustrations may be enhanced and blemished accident and governmental terms (27, 25) cleared up.

We leap the 'crisis' gulf to Simon Corcoran's recent <sup>B\*\*</sup>*The Empire of the Tetrarchs*,<sup>6</sup> now a paperback with 13 pages of additional notes and bibliography. Corcoran combs the material, discussing forms of communication, secretaries, recipients, and what they received. Under the hard pie-crust of its start, notably on the Gregorian and Hermogenian Codes, and closing appendices (Corcoran does not translate less substantial passages or give a glossary), this is a meaty, ultimately juicy work. The 'Prices Edict' chapter is particularly rewarding, and those on the governor's role and the emperor in action have contributions for this ongoing subject. Equally, Corcoran's exploration of the powers of the lesser Tetrarchs offers food for thought on relations between earlier partners, and Appendices on imperial plurals and abstract forms of address are illuminatingly traced to earlier etiquette. Overall, Corcoran stresses the classicism of the Tetrarchs, and, while a valuable work of reference, illuminates *Realia* beyond the gulf.

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