

ambiguity and semantic shifts to underline his position as an oracle-like teacher, a *μάντις* whose teaching was not comprehensible to everyone. However, the new elite to whom Empedocles addressed his teaching did not consist of an aristocracy of birth but of a 'spiritual' upper class.

Rhetoric connects Gorgias, the theme of Chapter 9, with Empedocles, whose method is now compared with that of Gorgias. Since his own times, Gorgias has been considered an elitist: the contents of his speeches were hidden behind extravagant diction. However, in W.'s view, Gorgias' elitism continues the strategy of Empedocles: the new elite is not necessarily the aristocracy, but consists of those who have dedicated themselves to rhetorical training. Although seemingly paradoxical, it is thus understandable that W. calls Gorgias' style democratising: Gorgias is seen as a person who makes the art of writing available to sections of society who had previously had no share in it.

The final Chapter before the concluding remarks, Chapter 10, delivers the promise of its title, 'A Sicilian Enlightenment' ('Eine sizilische Aufklärung'). The arguments developed in the previous chapters are now presented in full. W. argues for a pre-democratic egalitarianism ('vordemokratischer Egalitarismus') in Sicily. In support, the Sicilian curse-tablets (*defixiones*) are brought into play; they originated, in W.'s view, in the linguistically Doric colonies, where writing was confined to an especially small literate elite. He goes on to claim that such skills soon became more common, and thus there was more variation in the social background of the authors of the *defixiones*; this is somewhat contradictory and not entirely convincing. However, it does not negate the validity of W.'s argumentation. In Chapter 10, W. connects in an inspiring way the phenomena of Sicilian *Sprachkultur* to the democratising developments in three domains: poetics, mantics and justice (following Marcel Detienne's distinction). The discussion is fascinating and full of thought-provoking material, and it shows how linguistic and literary analysis can be used to illustrate the social and political history of Greek colonisation.

University of Helsinki

KALLE KORHONEN  
kalle.korhonen@helsinki.fi

## CATTLE AND CULTURE

McINERNEY (J.) *The Cattle of the Sun. Cows and Culture in the World of the Ancient Greeks*. Pp. xx + 340, ills. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010. Cased, £30.95, US\$45. ISBN: 978-0-691-14007-0.

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Reviewing *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity*, edited by C.R. Whittaker, in 1988, R. Osborne concluded by underlining the need for a 'parallel volume exploring the place of animal husbandry in ancient social history' (*CR* 39.1 [1989], 97). Several articles appeared but this is the first book-length treatment of the subject.

Indeed, McI. goes beyond Osborne's suggestion by proposing 'to explore not only how and under what conditions stock breeding was practiced, but also the place of cattle in the Greek *imaginaire*' (p. 4). He sees both registers as 'recursively linked' (p. xi) and conceives this rapport using P. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (p. 5). This is a focal point because as a 'system of internalized schemes' that is able to produce 'all thoughts, perceptions, and actions characteristic of a culture',

the *habitus* can still be current long after its creation, even if circumstances have completely changed. Thus, 'it is possible to speak of the Greeks as both a pastoral and post-pastoral society, practicing farming, manufacturing, and trade, yet still wedded to cattle because of their rich accumulation of significance' (p. 5).

The eleven chapters are organised in a sequence destined to demonstrate this. Chapter 1, 'Cattle Habits', establishes the methodological and theoretical framework to understand 'the bovine idiom' (E. Evans Pritchard's formula) of the Greeks, namely the ways by which the cattle stratum gave form to one of the profound layers of the Greek *imaginaire*. But McI. also calls attention to the inadequate importance given to the bovine idiom in economic studies, which frequently concentrate on farming and animal husbandry as an additional production, overlooking the large-scale cattle industry.

The first half of the book now follows a general diachronic development from the Neolithic period to Archaic Greece, examining the role of cattle both in the economy and in the *imaginaire*. Chapter 2, 'The Paradoxes of Pastoralism', explores the domestication process in Prehistory, especially of large animals, as a separation of human from Nature. Becoming human engenders sacrifice as a sacralisation of violence implied in killing raised animals. Chapter 3, 'Cattle Systems in Bronze Age Greece', assesses the redistributive economies of Minoan and Mycenaean Crete from the viewpoint of cattle culture. Even if palaces did not exert total control over economy, large-scale pastoralism was an activity monopolised by palatial centres through networks of regional cooperation, because of the enormous political and social value of cattle. This explains why the bull had a central place in Cretan symbols and rituals, which continued well beyond the fall of palaces.

Dark Age chieftains and big men were the successors of Bronze Age kingdoms. Despite the changes in the organisation of power and settlement and the subsequent shifts in herding, 'cattle retained their status as the single most valuable commodity' (p. 73). McI. carefully shows in Chapter 4, 'Epic Consumption', and Chapter 5, 'Heroes and Gods', that sacrifice and feasting remained at the core of Greek society, creating a close bond between cattle and status and favouring the development of specific institutions such as bride price, gift exchange and raiding. As the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and Heracles' cattle raids show, cattle habits were vital in forming the idea of the hero and in displaying power, authority and status both among the Greeks themselves and in their contacts with non-Greeks. Conceptions of the gods were even more closely modelled on the bovine idiom. Chapter 6, 'Gods, Cattle, and Space', deals with the Panhellenic formation during Archaic times of the pantheon rooted in cattle symbols, of a religious system centred on sacrifice and collective feasting, and of a distinct sacred space negotiated between gods and their sanctuaries, where contacts among gods and with humans were made through cattle.

The second half of the book has a more synchronic organisation, studying the effects of cattle *habitus* on distinct levels of *polis*-sanctuary complex. Chapter 7, 'Sacred Economics', focusses on large-scale herding conducted by sanctuaries when much more land was under cultivation. Sanctuaries carried out the sacrifices, managing cattle supplies and using neighbouring lands to raise livestock. If the need for animals increased, more distant lands were required. Regulations to prevent cultivation of sacred land and to assure the supply of animals were merged with varied ways of handling cattle production, from direct breeding and land control by sanctuaries to leasing. Chapter 8, 'Cities and Cattle Business', refers to the economic issues implied in providing cities and urban sanctuaries. Sacrifices created

a demand that obliged officials to buy herds, stimulating the growth of a private sector possibly organised on a previous draft animal market, which could demand, as for Athens, to obtain external supplies. It also provided a vast amount of meat for urban consumption. Public, religious and private spheres thus interacted to handle the sacrificial market.

Chapter 9, 'Sacred Law', and Chapter 10, 'Authority and Value', consider topics narrowly derived from both previous chapters. Sanctuaries had to regulate all aspects of sacred activities. A body of procedural legislation for rituals was enacted; this had consequences for the shape of the secular law of the *polis*, whose conditions were related to sanctuaries' management of the cattle system. For the same reason, sanctuaries' authority had an important role in the founding of the state, in the evolution of economic systems and in the setting of law: 'Sanctuaries were frequently the engine of change in the Greek world' (p. 225). Owing to the regularity and reliability they inspired in sacrificial commerce, they also played a key role in the growth of a monetised economy, cattle providing the measure of value, wealth and exchange.

Chapter 11 sums up McI.'s core argument, reaffirming that cattle *habitus* was 'like a marker in the cultural DNA of Greek society' (p. 241). The book is lucidly written and well argued, analysing an impressive amount of evidence from Neolithic to post-Classical times and drawing on ethnographic comparisons with African peoples to highlight the effects of pastoral culture in the Greek world. Although McI. asserts it is a mistake to equate origin with explanation (p. 9), he does seem to seek a myth of origin by referring to the emergence of cattle *habitus* in the Neolithic that continued into the Classical period (p. 28). It is true that such a *mentalité* (pp. 196–7) works in what F. Braudel defined as the *longue durée*. But it appears perhaps more likely, according to McI.'s own research, that the evolving process of the bovine idiom affecting the Greek world had its beginnings during the later Bronze Age and the early Iron Age. In any case, McI.'s book will long remain crucial for all those interested in cattle, and it should provoke new debate not only on this subject but also on several related topics.

*Universidad de Buenos Aires-CONICET*

JULIÁN GALLEGO  
julianalejandrogallego@hotmail.com

## MARATHON

BILLOWS (R.A.) *Marathon. How One Battle Changed Western Civilization*. Pp. 304, maps. London and New York: Duckworth Overlook, 2010. Cased, £16.99, US\$30. ISBN: 978-0-7156-3908-5 (UK), 978-1-59020-168-8 (US).

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B.'s book is an interesting and well written contribution to our understanding of the Persian Wars. Duckworth's Overlook series is aimed at non-specialist readers. B. offers an exciting account of a turbulent and decisive period in Greek history. The Introduction presents the book's main argument that the Battle of Marathon was a turning point in both Greek history and western civilisation. Persian domination of Greece – the cradle of western civilisation – and the destruction of Athens would have had significant impact on how western civilisation developed. B. assumes that the Athenians would have suffered gravely from a Persian conquest: they