

rich to poor. However, the larger linear argument of a development from a period of moderated greed directed outward to divisive greed within the *polis* that B. sees in the texts of Herodotus and Thucydides is too pat, and takes on an increasingly artificial feel, as many of the important supports evaporate upon scrutiny and subtleties are lost. If the history is drawn from the texts, then it becomes problematic as well. B. poses important and intriguing questions and his book should be read; but a more careful treatment is required to answer them fully.

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SPARTA: 'A MODERN WOMAN IMAGINES'

S. B. POMEROY: *Spartan Women*. Pp. xvii + 198, ills. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Paper. ISBN: 0-19-513067-7 (0-19-513066-9 hbk).

Spartan women have proved exciting down the millennia. Sometimes they are all too exciting, as moralists have inflated the virgins and mothers of the Lakonian villages into monsters or exemplars, bold sluts or moral karyatids. A generation ago, Sarah Pomeroy, with her unopinionated textbook *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*, did more than anyone to establish the study of Greek women generally as an open, non-partisan discipline. But Sparta here has worked its traditional magic. P.'s new book is excited and personal. Taken at face value, it will be widely influential and elaborately misleading. Behind the Spartan women reconstructed by P. stands an unacknowledged template, of an ideal of womanhood altogether better known.

A mark of sophisticated commentary on Sparta has been, from the first, learned doubt. Thucydides once confessed himself obstructed by the secrecy of the Spartan constitution (5.68.2); Plutarch opened his *Lykourgos* by observing the pervasive discord among his sources. In recent scholarship, the question of *le mirage spartiate* has been central, as, for example, in the difference between Cartledge and Kennell on whether late information about the *agoge* can be read back to the Classical period. Serious doubt is now cast even on whether Spartan austerity predated the fifth century. P. is not at home in these waters.

P.'s remark, presented parenthetically, that 'the written evidence [sc. on Spartan women] . . . is not without problems' (p. 163) as an understatement would be hard to beat. Her approach to sources may appear, if indiscriminating, at least systematically inclusive, as on p. 69, where she seems to give equal weight to Aristotle and to the (apocryphal) *Sayings of Spartan Women*. But in reality, important material is neglected. Episodes here underplayed say much about the author's (ir)rationality. From Theopompos (at Athen. 609b) we hear of fourth-century Sparta executing some of its prominent citizen women for political reasons—a rarity in Greek history, suggesting an exceptionally high influence for Spartan women. From Xenophon and Aristotle there is evidence of Spartan women panicking in the face of an enemy invasion (of 370/69)—again, exceptional material since concerned with behaviour in mass and in public. The third-century revolutions at Sparta generated remarkably extensive surviving testimony on Spartan women's action—from Phylarkhos via Plutarch (in the Lives of Agis and Kleomenes): detailed and idealizing material which again involves political executions of leading women. These episodes, which require careful treatment in any work on Spartan women, are passed over rapidly in P.'s book. Why? Perhaps, as

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we shall see, because the women in these episodes are shown misbehaving (in 370/69) or as noble victims. And neither rôle helps promote the ideals which concern P.

Much lower levels of evidence suffice to underpin P.'s portrayal of certain other behaviours. Did Spartan women ride horses? Late evidence has Agesilaos playing 'pony on a stick' (Plut. *Ages.* 25; *Mor.* 13.70) with his children, and two of the latter were girls (p. 20). Did women hunt? Xenophon's testimony about mythical, non-Spartan women is combined with the probability that Mt. Taygetos was rich in game; and 'Doubtless, like Spartan youths, they [Spartan women] could have outraced and encircled a hare' (p. 18). Also, Spartan women 'were taught to throw a javelin' (ibid.)—though the evidence is from the Roman period, and for once a negative argument from the silence of classical sources is overwhelming, so fascinated were Athenians by the idea of Sparta's unfeminine women (on which see the altogether more sophisticated work of Ellen Millender). P. reacts defensively to the debacle of 370/69, with its damaging feminine disorder in the face of the enemy: 'One may speculate that Spartan women would have been better at defending themselves if need be, for Plutarch (*Mor.* 227d12) states . . .' (p. 18): this speculation, based on idealizing evidence of the Roman period, seems to be of more interest to P. than the fourth-century reports of Xenophon and Aristotle as to what actually happened. Spartan women could 'drive': 'Like male landowners, Spartan women could drive or ride out to survey their property . . .' (p. 21). P. admits that the passage cited in support, Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.5, refers only to men. The women of Sparta were armed, because 'Wearing a Doric peplos meant always having a weapon to hand' (p. 135)—a *fibula*. No ancient text is cited on the use of such a weapon by a Spartan woman. 'In some cases they [*sc.* Spartan women] wielded the power of life and death over their adult sons' (p. 137)—the evidence being late moral vignettes.

Spartan women might have colourful and pleasing sex-lives. 'Though no ancient source mentions that any woman actively chose her surrogate husband, we suggest that a lively young wife would be able to exert influence on a feeble old husband'. Then, as P. delicately puts it, 'we need not assume that the wife's experience with her surrogate husband was unpleasant' (p. 45). Women of Sparta were 'trained to speak in public' (p. 9), the evidence being the insults they cast at bachelors and cowards. They might put career before marriage; of Kyniska, P. writes, Agesilaos' 'attempts to manipulate her . . . suggest that she did not have a husband. Her single-minded devotion to racing may have not left any time for wifely duties' (p. 22 n. 79). But since King Agesilaos, her brother, was supremely influential, and she herself was most probably rich in her own right, any husband might well be left out of the tale.

In short, Spartan women may seem 'feisty' (p. 122). They carry weapons, are trained in arms, dispose of a death penalty; they drive to work; they may privilege their careers, choose their own partners, have good sex, use contraception (p. 96); they speak out boldly. For P., the appeal of this picture evidently has little to do with the quality of evidence for it. Rather, the Spartan woman is being used as a vehicle for modern ideals, as presented above all on American film; the inspiration may have less to do with Kyniska and Lampito than with Cagney and Lacey, those weapon-carrying career women on wheels.

Is P. aware of what she is doing? She writes (p. 160), 'It is anachronistic to discuss Spartan women in terms of contemporary feminist criteria and goals . . .' Again (p. 33), 'In highlighting women . . ., we are not engaging in affirmative action or compensatory scholarship'. As with these telling protests, P. locates herself unmistakably, if unconsciously, within a tradition: 'In the young American Republic, motherhood was designed as a political rôle for women . . . They were proud of their rôle in shaping a

new generation of citizens. Women's history was marshaled into service to promote this view' (p. 62). P.'s book is less a work of history, more an exercise in civics—and civics of a notably privileged kind. She states, 'motherhood could be a fulfilling experience for women, especially, a modern woman imagines, where nurses are available and the mother has no domestic chores' (pp. 61–2).

Given the present tenses, it does sound rather as if the condition of helot women at Sparta is in effect being used to commend the use of women today as domestic servants. This book will undoubtedly take a large place in women's studies courses. But when students are informed that Spartan women could 'outrance a hare', or that 'Marriage at a mature age produced healthy children for healthy mothers' (p. 136), there seems a good chance that they will detect that familiar burden of the young, unrealistic uplift.

Before reprinting, the publisher should re-edit. As things stand, we have 'Philopoimon' (p. 91), 'charicature' (p. 155), and 'overexaggerate' (p. 123), while at p. 128 Sappho (of c. 600 B.C.) is said to predate Julia Balbilla (at 130 A.D.) by 'almost a thousand years'. On Spartan marriage: at p. 44 'bride and groom were around eighteen', but on p. 56 the groom is older (the figure of 30 is suggested). Sparta was not normally 'a monarchy' (p. 124), but a dyarchy. Three women bearing the name 'Chilonis' (one from the sixth century, two from the third) have been conflated into one in the index. But editing of a different level would have been needed to deal with the statement (p. 76) that Kyniska 'defied her brother' Agesilaos. There is no word of this 'defiance' in any source. And the chariot-racing which is supposed to embody the defiance was, according to Xenophon, taken up by Kyniska at her brother's wish (Xen. *Ages.* 9.6, acknowledged by P. at p. 23; Plut. *Ages.* 20.1, *Mor.* 212b). As to P.'s claim (p. 170) that Artemisia of Halikarnassos 'commanded her fleet admirably' at Salamis according to Herodotos: Xerxes did indeed think so, at a distance. But, according to Herodotos, the ship which Artemisia—in full flight—rammed and sank was in fact one from her own side; all its crew were killed, and Artemisia's action was for her cause *κακόν* (Hdt. 8.88). Thus, P.'s Kyniska has far more independence, and her Artemisia far more competence, than the sources allow us to say. In this book, idealizing is of the essence. But, as has been observed (by G. Devereux), to idealize is in a sense to reject, to deem the reality unacceptable. This is a work in which the women of Sparta are—as of old—kept at a distance and used as instruments.

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THE FOURTH-CENTURY AEGEAN

J. BUCKLER: *Aegean Greece in the Fourth Century B.C.* Pp. xi + 544, 7 maps, pls. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003. US\$190. ISBN: 90-04-09785-6.

As Buckler notes in his preface (p. ix), the last coherent history of this period was K. J. Beloch's *Griechische Geschichte*, the relevant volumes of which were published in 1922–3. There have been numerous histories of Greece since then, as well as biographies or treatments of political figures and kings, together with specialized works on aspects of the period. The last would include B.'s previous books, *The Theban Hegemony, 371-362 B.C.* (Cambridge, MA, 1980) and *Philip II and the Sacred War* (Leiden, 1989). However, given epigraphic and numismatic discoveries, plus the increase in topographical studies, a new history of Aegean Greece in the fourth

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