

In the introduction, the editors rightly emphasize mentality as an important shaping factor in the processes of banking and investment. S. Psôma offers an excellent overview of uses of coinage, explaining thoroughly the practices of different standards; she produces an almost comprehensive regional account of standards used and coin hoards found in the extended Greek world. V. Chankowski discusses the movement of money as an indication of the economic development of the Classical and Hellenistic world. She focuses on the role of temples as spaces of deposits of money; this differentiates them from banks since temples did not, on the whole, invest their capital (here, Classical Delos is the exception to the rule). Banks, on the other hand, engaged in activities of investment. N. Giannakopoulos examines the Roman practice of storing wealth in domestic contexts; he produces an extremely useful list of coin hoards found in the Greek world. The argument here is that benefactions and investments show high levels of liquidity available to the upper classes; indeed, the primary role of various processes of savings and credit was the continuation of existing class stratifications. G. Merianos shows the importance of the teachings of the early Church Fathers and later Byzantine intellectuals for actual economic practices, such as trade and investment. Y. Stoyas, E. Ragia and M. Mathaiou, in five chapters, discuss the practices of banking and management of money throughout the 'long' Byzantine period, while A. Papadia-Lala and I. Mantouvalos cover the case of Venetian Crete and that of Ottoman mainland Greece respectively.

S. Petmezas shows eloquently what kind of impact the foundation of the modern Greek state and the first Greek banks had on practices of banking: as more lower-(mostly agricultural) and middle-class Greeks deposited money in banks, more capital was available to be reinvested in the cities and the countryside, thus transforming traditional uses of money, traditional approaches to hoarding and the expectations/aspirations of these social groups. A. Mandylara places Greek banking practices within the context of Mediterranean credit networks. M. Psalidopoulos examines the impact of modern economic theories of banking on Greek 20th-century practices. K. Kostis, in two contributions, produces a social and economic history of banking in the pre-war and post-war periods: in the first contribution, he stresses the limited access to bank accounts for the majority of

the population, especially outside the big urban centres. In the second, he highlights the impact of the war on banking activities; the lack of liquidity was at the centre of governmental (and non-governmental) attempts to restructure the Greek economy, after a disastrous period of war and civil strife. S. Spanodemou examines the drop in banking deposits in the period after the 1980s, which had significant consequences for the economy of the modern Greek state (consequences that now appear borderline catastrophic). Finally, A. Syrmaloglou offers us a concise history of the Greek Postal Bank, which has sponsored the volume.

The audience for this volume is primarily a modern Greek one, and not simply because of the language in which its contributions are written. However, students and scholars alike will find much to enjoy in this volume, as it questions assumptions and challenges our current relationships with money, banking, investment and redistribution.

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OGDEN (D.) **Alexander the Great. Myth, Genesis and Sexuality.** Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011. Pp. 276, illus. £20. 9780859898386.

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Ogden's fresh reading of Alexander's myth focuses on two important topics: birth and sexual behaviour. The scope of his book is a re-evaluation of the literary tradition on Alexander the Great related to these themes.

The book is structured mainly in two parts. In the first part (chapters 1–4) the author addresses the complex issue of Alexander's siring in myth. In chapter 1 he examines thoroughly the three different traditions regarding the seal-ring, the thunderbolt and the siring serpent, and draws comparison with the available iconographic evidence. The author insists on the identity of the siring *drakon* (chapter 2), contextualizes it within the broader serpent imagery in the Alexander legend and argues that this serpent must have been an avatar of Zeus Meilichios, an important divinity worshiped in Macedonia in the form of a giant serpent. The mythologization of Alexander's birth is dated within the first decades after the king's death and in this process

the Ptolemies, in their quest for legitimacy of their own power, must have put their own seal on the representation of this serpent in shaping it with features from Asclepius and Agathos Daimon.

The next two chapters are on a similar theme, but the focus is broadened: siring and birth myths are contextualized within the Argead dynasty and the broader Hellenistic kingship. In chapter 3 Ogden looks at the foundation myth of the Argead dynasty in its different versions and offers a 'genealogy' of these versions. Inventions and manipulations related to successive founders of this dynasty (the eponymous Macedon, Caranos, Perdikkas, Archelaos and also, indirectly, Midas) are made by those who have a claim to this myth in order to project their own present into a mythical past and also to outline the mythical founder as a forerunner of the actual king. This postulation drives Ogden (chapter 4) to explore the impact of Alexander's siring myth on the Successors' (and not only the Successors') broader legitimating imagery by inspecting their invented foundation narratives. These inventions gain a meaning only because they are inscribed in a wider system of narratives, in which the paradigms of Heracles and Perseus have a normative role.

Chapter 5 recapitulates Ogden's earlier analysis of the military-diplomatic importance of the Macedonian royal polygamy, especially during Philipp's reign, and underlines the utility of this practice as a template for Alexander's own conduct *vis-à-vis* his marital and sexual liaisons.

Self continence, absolute heterosexuality and non-promiscuity are constituent elements of W. Tarn's *Alexander the Great*, (Cambridge 1948) and for a long time marked the image of Alexander's sexuality as historical phenomenon. In the second part of his book (chapters 6–9) Ogden challenges the historicity of this image and in chapter 6 he contextualizes the figure of an Alexander 'master of his passions' in the broader historiographical and romance tradition. Furthermore, he argues that Alexander's conjugal relations with Roxane, Stateira, Parysatis and, to some extent, Barsine were used by ancient authors mostly as a projection of later perceptions related to marriage and military conquest. As for Alexander's relations with courtesans (chapter 7), they seem to be heavily fictionalized and can hardly help us understand the sexual codes of the Macedonian court. They rather illustrate – as do Alexander's relationships

with a series of substitute mothers like Ada and Candace – the influence a single woman can exercise on a mighty king and conqueror. According to Ogden, despite the historicity of women like Thais and Ada, we deal here with a recurrent narrative motif which should be evaluated as such.

Finally, chapters 8 and 9 are dedicated to perceptions of masculinity and effeminacy, as they are reflected in narratives of Alexander's homoeroticism. Ogden stresses once again the limited historical value of the available information on Alexander's real sexual life and the moralizing context of this information. In addition, he looks at the influence of other mythical (Achilles-Patroclus) and historical (Hadrian-Antinous) same-sex couples on the Alexandrography and concludes that the Alexander-Hephaestion relationship must have been not that of an *erastes-eromenos* model, as often described in the sources, but rather that of a peer-relationship, a practice already known in the Macedonian elite. However, the evidence related to Bagoas does recall the *erastes-eromenos* model and, moreover, it invites consideration of the modes of transcending the borders between ruling and being ruled. Chapter 9 explores the fields of meaning of Alexander-*gynnis*, that is the king's alleged unmanliness in both the military and political fields (unwarlike and orientalizing) and in bed (eunuchism and impotence). Ogden suggests here that the enactment of the negative sides of Dionysus, an additional role-model for Alexander, could eventually help us understand Alexander's womanishness as reflected in the sources.

The comparative approach by Ogden sheds new light on the insemination and propagation of two constituent elements of the Alexander myth: his genesis and sexuality. The author is very conscious of the limited historical value of the examined material, yet he does manage to offer insightful comments on the mythologizing traditions of Alexander. One could remark on the absence in the bibliography of important works, like that of C. Jouanno, *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre* (Paris 2002), or the absence of an *index locorum*. Nevertheless, in sum, this study offers food for thought on subjects often marginalized or over interpreted by modern Alexander historians.

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