

Nepos' inspiration from and innovations to oratorical genres as a pioneer of Latin biography is the most compelling evidence in the service of Ginelli's aim.

The introduction's treatment of the connections between biography and historiography is not quite as strong. Ginelli states that biography 'looks at minute details' while historiography 'takes a more general overview of events' (27). To support this assertion, Ginelli quotes from Plutarch's parallel lives of Alexander and Julius Caesar in which the famous biographer defends his practice of not cataloging in detail all the great events and achievements in the lives of these two leaders, but instead aims at a portrait of their characters based often on a selective recording of seemingly small and insignificant things. However, the historiographical method of Thucydides, a key source for several of the biographies in this volume and a historian who was (in)famously selective, largely centered on detailed descriptions of sometimes relatively insignificant events (such as the massacre at Mycalessus at 7.29) to serve as a paradigm for other events that go undescribed, and to provide a portrait (of sorts) of, in this case, declining Athenian character.

I defer to my colleagues better versed in Latin philology to judge the commentary's strengths in terms of evaluating Nepos' style, grammar and syntax. I only mention that the notes on these points are fulsome and rich with comparisons to other Latin authors, which I found quite informative and which will surely aid further research. For this reviewer, the strongest passages in the commentary deal with Nepos' allusions to the persons and politics of Late Republican Rome, certainly a prime motivation behind Nepos chronicling the lives of fifth-century Greeks in the first place. The discussions of the nature of Miltiades' tyranny in the Chersonese and its parallel to tyrannical aspirations among Roman leaders (113–14) and Alcibiades' rhetorical style and how it relates to the oratorical theories of Cicero (233) are two especially effective examples. Also insightful are Ginelli's remarks on how Nepos viewed Athens and Sparta respectively, and how that is borne out in the biographies. Lysander's fall from grace suggests that Spartan society is a good one, and those leaders who stray from it are to be blamed, while Athens drove out many of its best leaders unnecessarily (217–18). In terms of the nitty-gritty details of Greek history, Ginelli touches on some of the key issues, but the bibliography is frequently not up to date (such as in the discussion of the Battle of Marathon, 98–99).

Ginelli's commentary should be a necessary resource for those engaged in scholarship on Nepos as a Latin stylist and innovator in the biographical genre. Hellenists, including historians, will find quite a bit of use here, and should certainly avoid consulting Nepos as a source for the fifth century without a copy of this volume in hand.

MATTHEW A. SEARS

University of New Brunswick

Email: matthew.sears@unb.ca

GLOMB (T.) **Connecting the Isiac Cults: Formal Modeling in the Hellenistic Mediterranean** (Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation). London: Bloomsbury, 2022. Pp. 192, illus. £85. 9781350210691.
doi:[10.1017/S007542692400017X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S007542692400017X)

Tomáš Glomb uses digital and mathematical models to bring clarity to the study of the spread of the Isiac cults (the worship of Isis, Serapis, Anubis, Harpocrates and a small number of other Egyptian gods) in the Hellenistic Mediterranean. His short book covers the development and spread of the cults before focusing on two case studies and ending

with a final summary chapter. The first case study explores the spread of the cults in the Aegean. Glomb creates a visual model mapping the likely trade routes taken between ports in the Aegean and Egypt (a major source of grain for the region), as well as a mathematical model which shows how various elements might have impacted the spread of the cult. According to these models, military and diplomatic interventions by the Ptolemies indirectly led to their spread. In the second case study, focused on the coast of Asia Minor, Glomb maps out the distances between major cities, Ptolemaic political centres and the locations of Isiac temples or artefacts using a sophisticated system that takes into account average journey times. Through this, he demonstrates that cities under Ptolemaic rule or influence (or close to one) were more likely to have an Isiac temple within their limits or close by. A spatial visual analysis demonstrates that coastal cities with high levels of traffic from Egypt were more likely to have evidence of Isiac cults than inland cities. He concludes that the Ptolemies had a positive role in the spread of the Isiac cults, but the model cannot confirm whether this was the result of official encouragement.

Glomb is clear about what the mathematical models can and cannot show, and his conclusions are always well balanced. One wonders how different the findings gained through this mathematical methodology are from the results of standard historiographical methodologies. For example, the importance of trade routes in the spread of religious ideas is long established. In his article 'Two Studies on the Cult of Serapis in the Hellenistic World', *Opuscula Athreienisia*, 3 (1960), P.M. Fraser had already arrived at very similar conclusions, although Glomb's methods provide new insights into the underlying causes of this trend. I would compare this book to Laurent Bricault's recent *Isis Pelagia* (Leiden 2020), which focuses on one specific aspect of the goddess, her maritime form. Bricault takes it as a given that the sea was a major vector for transmission of this cult. But he follows this up with an examination of how the cult developed on both the global and the local level through a sustained analysis of the evidence, looking at the roles played by private and state actors, like the Ptolemies. While acknowledging the complexity of the situation, the book's conclusions are somewhat lacking in depth. For example, in the final chapter summarizing the findings, Glomb argues that the spread can be explained in part by the fact that the Ptolemies 'occupied the transportation network in the Aegean Sea by capturing very connective nodes' (137). But what did this look like in practice? Who were the sailors, the dock workers, the ship-owners and merchants who made up this transportation network? How did they engage with Ptolemaic officials and how and why did this benefit the spread of the Isiac cults?

A reader's appraisal of how successful Glomb is in his approach will come down to the extent to which they believe mathematical modelling has a role in the study of ancient history. Glomb himself argues that a 'methodological synthesis between quantitatively oriented approaches and established tools of historiography' (140) would benefit the discipline. A more critical approach to the evidence would have been desirable. For example, the accident of survival and differences in reading need addressing when creating quantitative models based on ancient 'data sets' such as epigraphy. Mathematical methodologies offer a strong starting point, providing new readings and highlighting trends that need further investigation, but they cannot wholly answer more nuanced questions.

Those caveats aside, it is a useful addition to scholarship on the Isiac cults and more generally on Hellenistic religion. Despite using advanced mathematics, it is an accessible book. Glomb takes us through the mathematical process and findings in a very clear and engaging style. This makes it possible for a competent scholar to understand and pick apart the workings, even if they would not be confident to use and manipulate the actual formulae. This is vital to ensure the book can be understood more widely. Overall, it is a very readable study that holds value across ancient history more generally as it provides a

sustained practical demonstration of how statistical modelling can be applied to historical problems. I would recommend it to anyone interested in new ways of practising history.

SIMON BRALEE

University College London

Email: simon.bralee.15@ucl.ac.uk

GREATREX (G.) (ed.) with CAMERON (A.) **Procopius of Caesarea: *The Persian Wars*. Translation, with Introduction and Notes.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xxviii + 251. £75. 9781107165700.

GREATREX (G.) **Procopius of Caesarea: *The Persian Wars*. A Historical Commentary.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xxxiii + 851. £140. 9781107053229. doi:[10.1017/S0075426923000940](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426923000940)

Geoffrey Greatrex has produced the first English translation since Henry Dewing (*Procopius: History of the Wars* (London 1914)) of the first two books of the sixth-century historian Procopius' *Wars of Justinian*, which cover the Roman campaigns against Khusro's Persian empire. This is a full translation as opposed to Anthony Kaldellis' revision of Dewing's eight books of the *Wars* (*The Wars of Justinian: Prokopios* (Indianapolis 2014)). Greatrex's accompanying commentary is also unique in being the first commentary on a work of Procopius.

Although the translation is a landmark in Procopian studies, it is the accompanying commentary that stands out as representing a major breakthrough in the study of Procopius and the first two books of *Wars*. Greatrex sets the scene perfectly for those new to the subject with a brief overview of Procopius, the state of the Roman and Persian empires of the day and their relationship with each other. This strikes the right balance for the reader without getting bogged down in an extensive account of the political machinations of the time.

Much of the introductory section of the commentary focuses on the eight books of *Wars* as a whole and explains that they are not divided chronologically, but by the geography of the campaigns themselves. This introduction also includes an overview of the key events and people to be found in books I and II. Greatrex steers a neutral course on the whole, but he does highlight opposing views on certain issues such as Procopius' religion, the presence of invective in *Wars* and the role of speeches, leaving it to the reader to decide which interpretation is most persuasive.

The introductory chapters continue with a deeper look at Procopius' use of speeches, letters and digressions and offer several alternative views on the influences for these. This is a valuable insight into Procopius' writing since *Wars* contains, as Greatrex states, 120 speeches and 45 letters. These speeches typically appear before a battle and Greatrex notes that these speeches and letters could have provided Procopius the opportunity to criticize Justinian subtly when putting words in the mouths of Rome's enemies. This taps into an important current area of research into Procopius, namely the possible use of coded invective within *Wars* to criticize his emperor, as he would go on to do more explicitly in his *Anekdotai* (aka *Secret History*). Greatrex's treatment of this issue is typical of his approach throughout the commentary in that he offers insight into the writings and invites the reader to consider whether these speeches are used as scene-setting before the battle or reflect what was actually said, which could possibly be the case for the speeches of the general Belisarius, whom Procopius accompanied on many of his campaigns. There