

Mystery Cults (1987), 'The Extraordinary Experience'. Like Burkert, B. does full justice to all other aspects of the cults, and thanks to his copious illustrations fuller justice to cult sites, artefacts and iconography. He also manages, by the skilful ordering and development of the chapters in which each set of mysteries/initiations is introduced, a diachronic narrative. One may be grateful, moreover, that this is not a *grand* narrative, over-endowed with links, influences and teleology.

But how does a twenty-first century academic address 'encountering the sacred' (B.'s final chapter title), when the encounterers took their 'extraordinary experience' to the grave two millennia ago? What they experienced and what they thought they had encountered was usually a secret. In some instances, confusion even about the names of the gods suggests that initiates and initiators alike would have been hard pressed to tell you precisely whose mysteries they had entered or administered (see especially Chapter 2 on the Kabeiroi and the Great Gods).

Better to comprehend the ancient experience of 'encountering the sacred' and to locate it on the larger map of the history of religions, B. compares analogous phenomena from modern times, where we have the double advantage of living subjects and anthropologically trained observers. In his final chapter, he adduces the experiences of snake-handling in twentieth-century American Pentecostal sects (pp. 217–21). In his introductory chapter (pp. 15–17) he draws on the researches of the anthropologist Harvey Whitehouse into initiations in the culture of the Baining (not Baktaman, as B.) people of New Guinea. This is an important move, because Whitehouse has generalised from his field research to propose a theory of two 'modes of religiosity', the 'imagistic' and the 'doctrinal' (see, for example, *Modes of Religiosity: a Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission*, 2004). The characteristics of its rites of initiation make Baining religion archetypally 'imagistic'. On the same criteria, B. argues, ancient mystery cults were clearly imagistic. In the Cognitive Science of Religion, it must be admitted, Whitehouse's 'two modes' theory is by no means a reigning orthodoxy (some are still asking 'where's the Science?'). However, its application by B. to the phenomena of Greek and Roman religion is an omen of profitable things to come.

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GREEK POLITICAL THOUGHT

CARTLEDGE (P.) *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*. Pp. xviii + 169. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Paper, £14.99, US\$24.99 (Cased, £40, US\$70). ISBN: 978-0-521-45595-4 (978-0-521-45455-1 hbk).

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C.'s new book is a lively, fast-paced 'introduction' (p. 143) to major aspects of Greek history and thought from 1300 B.C. to A.D. 120 (the death of Plutarch). Two chapters introduce its themes and 'problematics', moving concisely over a range of topics including the 'primacy of politics' in Greece, the *polis* as stateless community, and the ethical quality of Greek as against modern politics. Then six Narratives summarise the history of consecutive eras, each followed by one or two chapters on aspects of that era's politics or thought. The final chapter outlines Greek democratic legacies in Western history, ending with teledemocracy. This

text's brilliance, polished lucidity and learning – C. is admirably *à la page* with recent scholarship – come peppered with allusions to all sorts of topics (Heidegger's Nazism, the Iraq invasion, Myanmar, György Konrád), along with many bitter comments on contemporary democracy. Unrushed despite its scope, the discourse is a masterpiece of compression, and wise on many questions. Friendly and invariably courteous, it is a dazzling performance reflecting a deep humanity.

A 150-page history of 'political thought in practice' over 1500 years must be selective. C. announces an intention to focus on 'the thought, however inchoate or inarticulate, of the mass rather than the theories of the elite ... , ordinary Greeks' thought' not Plato or Aristotle, especially in revolutions (p. xii). Perhaps inevitably, however, the thought of the masses often proves elusive, not least in revolutions. Nor do C.'s pages consistently explore the impact of political thought or theory (here distinguished) on politics. With notable exceptions (e.g. C.'s sophisticated discussion of equality, pp. 6–10) much is paratactic: politics and/or theory (more than thought). Chapter 3 focusses on Homer, not archaic political realities. Politely discounting Haubold and Hammer, C. gives the Homeric masses – 'humble and meek' – only a minimal political role; 'they have literally no say' (p. 33). Chapter 4 primarily reconstructs Solon's intentions, rather than the concerns of the masses or (deliberately: p. xi) Solon's ideas. Chapter 5 defends Herodotus' view that Cleisthenes established Athenian democracy; far from there being any contribution by 'ordinary Greeks', C. doubts that Greece's first democracy involved any 'populist self-consciousness' (p. 60). Chapter 6, on the fifth-century invention of political theory, considers mostly literary attestations; the political impact of emerging democratic ideology is not discussed. Chapter 7 justifies the Athenians' execution of Socrates on the religious charge. Chapter 8 discusses elite political theories (Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle), stressing their limited political impact. A historical narrative introduced by utopianism, Chapter 9 briefly considers whether Stoic political theory influenced Cleomenes' third-century reforms at Sparta. Chapter 10 discusses the distortions or uselessness of Greek political theories (especially democracy) in the 'never democratic' (pp. 126–7) worlds of Cicero's and Plutarch's Rome.

Rather than concentrating on political thought or theory in practice or the significance of the masses, much of C.'s text is guided by a leitmotif, perhaps even an agenda, to set the history of democracy straight – his 'most key theme' (p. 46), a 'major problematic', 'a "Greek revolution" in politics' if ever there was one (p. 5) – expanding on his essay in K. Raaflaub et al., *The Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece* (2007). That is, not Solon, not Ephialtes, not the *dêmos*, but Cleisthenes established the first democracy 'for the Athenians' (p. 61), a *politeia* never of great importance outside classical Athens ('highly abnormal': p. 78), except c. 380–350 (pp. 80, 93–4). C.'s Solon established an oligarchy, C.'s interpretation of Solon's *mesoi* (p. 52); C. mentions only in passing (p. 51) the revolutionary ferment of the masses. 'There is no issue about *where*: [democracy] happened in Athens' (p. 46, C.'s emphasis), in 508/7. Outside Athens, the norm after 500 was 'rule by moderate oligarchies of wealth' (p. 53). Furthermore, the success of Cleisthenes' democracy implies 'the existence of some sort of organizing intelligence or guiding spirit' (p. 62). Elites even coined the term *dēmokratia* (p. 63). Soon after Aristotle's death, democracy was 'snuffed out' (p. 5). 'In the long run, ... oligarchy won out over democracy by a considerable distance' (p. 54).

A brief 'introduction' has little room to argue, and most of us acknowledge Cleisthenes' importance. On the other hand, major evidence for widespread popu-

lar political engagement and democracies outside Athens (including democracies encouraged by its fifth-century empire), before 508 and after 323, should not be ignored. Although its evidence and conclusions will mortally challenge his own, C. acknowledges (p. 57) but does not consider Eric Robinson's *The First Democracies: Early Popular Government outside Athens* (Stuttgart, 1997), which Mogens Hansen liked (*BMCR*, 1999). Raaflaub et al. analyse a mass of evidence for popular engagement in politics throughout the archaic age. In an appendix C. includes the text of – but nowhere discusses – a sixth-century law of Elis stating ‘the *rhetra* of the People shall be final’ and allowing emendations only by ‘the whole Council of 500 and the People in full assembly’ (p. 138, C.’s translation). There are dozens of parallels. C. stresses (p. 58) that Aristotle does not call Solon’s *politeia* a democracy: but *Ath. Pol.* 41.2 calls it ‘the beginning of democracy’ – and if Aristotle did not write this text, he read it. C. describes the instant success of deme government all across Attica, but attributes this success to Cleisthenes. We are back to democracy springing fully formed from Cleisthenes’ head, a man ignored and even despised by fifth-century democrats. As for later periods, P. Gauthier observed, ‘maltraitées par les historiens, ... les démocraties hellénistiques restent à découvrir’ (C. Nicolet [ed.], *Du Pouvoir dans l’antiquité* [1990], p. 99. *Per elitteras* C. notes, ‘precisely so!!’).

In many ways superb, C.’s fast-paced introduction sidesteps rather than resolves many questions. The debate on Greek democracy continues.

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PHILIP II

WORTHINGTON (I.) *Philip II of Macedonia*. Pp. xxvi + 303, ills, maps, pls. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008. Cased, £25, US\$35. ISBN: 978- 0-300-12079-0.

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More than fifteen years after N.G.L. Hammond’s *Philip of Macedon* (1994) a new biography of the Macedonian king and father of Alexander is most welcome. W., one of the leading scholars in the field, has already pointed out in his *Alexander the Great* (2003) that Philip’s reign and his achievements have to be regarded as a prerequisite for Alexander’s career and successes. Hence, it is the central aim of his new book to demonstrate the importance of Philip and to bring him out of the shadow of his famous son (pp. 1–2). After exploring the Macedonian situation before Philip as the point of departure, W. reconstructs the king’s youth, the time he spent as a hostage at Thebes, and his accession to the throne after the violent death of his brother Perdiccas III. When Philip took over the command the Macedonian state experienced a severe crisis including the threat of foreign incursions and tensions on the domestic front. Chapter 4 therefore focusses on the actions Philip undertook to transform his kingdom into a centralised, prosperous and effectively organised empire. Special relevance is given to the military reform, which converted unstable forces into a well-trained and disciplined army, as a decisive factor for Philip’s future achievements.