

In part 1 ('Phantom Phoenicians'), Quinn sets out on her journey from present-day Lebanon, where 'Phoenicianism', much in the style of the narratives providing the charter myths for 19th-century European nation states, is used as a common element connecting an otherwise hyper-fragmented country. From there, she travels back into the Levant's distant past, the period of 'Phoenician' expansion and of such cities as Tyre and Sidon, soon to become commercial hubs serving the Mediterranean and the Near East. Not only in the Iron Age, but through much of the 'classical' periods of Greek and Roman antiquity, hardly any trace can be found of people describing themselves as 'Phoenician'.

Quinn then changes perspective (in part 2, 'Many worlds') from emic to etic, briefly recapitulating Greek and Roman narratives about the Phoenicians, including the abounding stereotypes of Phoenician slyness and *Punica fides*. There is, obviously, no lack of scholarship on Homer's Phoenicians. Yet, one would have expected Quinn to deal with the conspicuous terminological shift from the *Iliad*'s 'Sidonians' to the 'Phoenicians' prevalent in the *Odyssey* – a footnote, but perhaps a significant one. Pots are of course pots, and Quinn duly (and rightly) disregards the material evidence as a marker of 'Phoenician' identity. She observes how, with a closer look, the boundaries between the supposed Phoenicians and other groups become blurred, both in the 'cosmopolitan cities' of the Levantine motherland and in the diaspora, which Quinn, somewhat irritatingly to a continental reader, keeps calling 'colonial'. The rather uncritical obsession with the colonial paradigm, in this reviewer's opinion, is the one major conceptual drawback of this otherwise formidable piece of scholarship.

Its analytical astuteness fully unfolds when Quinn tells the stories of the Tophet and of 'Melqart's Mediterranean'. In accepting that children were indeed sacrificed in the Tophet, she swims in the mainstream of current research, but introducing the Tophet as the cult place of religious dissenters is a brilliant move that could explain many of the archaeological oddities. Equally convincing is Quinn's interpretation of Melqart as a new narrative that owed its sweeping success to a growing awareness of belonging together in the Phoenician-speaking diaspora across the Mediterranean. The first catalyst in this movement was, of course, Carthage; the second was the Greek Herakles, with whom Melqart, in all likelihood an initially aniconic deity, was soon to be identified.

The 'first Phoenician' – at least the first we know of who claimed a Phoenician identity for himself – was Heliodorus of Emesa, a Greek writer living in the third century AD. In part 3 ('Imperial identities'), Quinn traces the invented tradition of Roman Imperial 'Phoenicianism' back to the destruction of Carthage and the attempts of those speaking a Phoenico-Punic language to find their place in the brave new world of Roman cosmopolitanism. The final chapter deals with the invention of the Phoenicians as a distant alter ego on the British Isles. The complementary intellectual history of Central Europe, which led to the vilifying image of the Phoenicians put forward in the 1943 volume edited by Vogt, would have been a welcome addition.

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HÅLAND (E.J.) **Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values.** Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. Pp. xix + 565. £63.99. 9781443831505 (vol. 1). Pp. xiv + 587. £68.99. 9781443831512 (vol. 2).

doi:10.1017/S0075426919000338

This extensive monograph in two volumes, translated into English by the author herself, draws on Håland's PhD dissertation (University of Bergen 2004). Through a comparative analysis of a selection of modern and ancient religious festivals, Håland aims to shed light on the position of women in ancient and modern Greece, and to fill the gaps in the sources describing ancient festivals. She asserts a cultural continuity between ancient and modern 'popular' cultures in the same geographical area: that is to say, between agricultural societies sharing a common repertoire of symbols and rituals. Within this research frame, the comparison between festivals is based on an analysis of the fertility cult that permeates them. In the author's view, a new approach to ancient Greek society is necessary, an approach that goes beyond the 'traditional source-criticism of the philologically oriented school' (1.5) and the 'androcentric' perspective of 'Western male' researchers who wish to identify themselves with the 'ancient male elite' (1.8–9).

Håland shows herself well aware of the problems aroused by survivalist, 'pseudo-survivalist' and anti-survivalist research (chapter 2).

She keeps her distance from 'Western concepts' such as classicism and orientalism, but nevertheless employs modern anthropological theories as heuristic tools. The author sets up essential principles (chapter 3), such as the multi-layered syncretism of current Greek religion; the relationship between mentality, as an implicit system of reference for a social group, and ideology, as an explicit ideal about reality conveyed by the ruling elite; and, in the author's view, the presence of sympathetic magic in all religious festivals, ancient and modern, and its practice within the Orthodox Church. The fertility cult is thereby considered to be an enduring mentality linked to mother goddesses, such as Demeter and the Virgin Mary.

The fourth chapter displays the results of several years of fieldwork on modern festivals. Håland studies seven festivals in all: five Church and two carnival. She selects these for the parallels that their rituals and symbols present to those of ancient cults and their times of celebration, marking transitional periods within the agricultural year. Women play a fundamental role in these celebrations, performing various rituals that are associated, in the author's view, with fertility, death and healing cults. Håland considers the holy persons to whom the festivals are dedicated as powerful deceased mediators between humans and 'stronger powers', an approach already expressed in her previous monograph *Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece* (Newcastle upon Tyne 2014).

Seven ancient festivals are selected due to their positions within the agricultural year and the important roles played by women (Panathenaia, Eleusinian Mysteries, Thesmophoria, Haloa, Anthesteria, City Dionysia and Adonia). These festivals are described (chapter 5) and compared (chapter 6) to the modern ones. Although most of the ancient festivals represented official polis ideology, they incorporated essential elements of 'popular' fertility, death and healing cults. The festivals integrated socio-economic agricultural content with narratives about the divinities involved. Håland draws a parallel between Pierre Bourdieu's Kabyle calendar (*Le sens pratique*, Paris 1980), which displays a male (dry) and a female (wet) season, and the ancient Greek calendar. She thus associates the Kabyle gender classification of the world with the ancient Greek polar concept of male and female elements. Among the latter, one of the more important is the maternal womb, which the author associates with various natural sites and artefacts such as caves, swamps, *megara*, *kistai*, jars, etc.

Although Håland uses Bourdieu's theories, she criticizes his androcentric perspective of male dominance over women, i.e. 'the official male elitist description of the relationship between men and women' (2.352). She claims to use a gendered and 'gyno-inclusive' or 'chthonic' approach to the problem, viewed 'from the bottom-up ... in contrast to the usual androcentric top-down approach' (2.352). Her study reveals a complementary relationship between the roles of the two genders and also the common values shared by two competing cultures: official ideology and popular cult.

*Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values* is a provocative book. The use of modern festivals to shed light on ancient ones, the numerous hypotheses about ancient festivals founded on the results of modern fieldwork, the often harsh judgements made by the author of the theories of numerous reputed scholars and the overlooking of recent bibliography on specific particulars will all arouse controversy. Nevertheless, the book offers a new and often neglected point of view – the female one – as well as several interesting descriptions of modern festivals. It will be welcomed by those interested in Greek religion, and in festivals in particular, both modern and ancient.

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WHITEHEAD (D.) **Philo Mechanicus, *On Sieges*** (Historia Einzelschriften 243). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016. Pp. 510. €84. 9783515113434.

doi:10.1017/S007542691900034X

This is the first complete English translation of Philo of Byzantium's treatise on fortifications and sieges. Written in Greek in the third century BC, it was part of a larger text, sometimes referred to as a *Mechanical Syntaxis*, which originally included sections on pneumatics, harbour building and catapult construction. This volume is also the latest instalment in a series of translations of ancient 'technical' works, many on military matters, through which Whitehead and his publishers are providing a very significant contribution to scholarship and a service to the public understanding of the ancient world.