

would be an excellent addition to any class on the visual manifestation of ancient Roman sexuality.

Though H. states clearly in his foreword that the contributions are not ‘to provide definitive answers’ (p. x), numerous discussions terminate abruptly and lack simple conclusions or concluding remarks. For example, the chapter ‘Dream Interpretation, Physiognomy, Body Divination’, while fascinating and successful in its treatment of these topics, ends suddenly with the appearance of warts or moles on Roman portraits. A ‘guide to further reading’ follows the content of each chapter and this is an invaluable aid to academics tackling new material or designing a syllabus. With the exception of several chapters (e.g. ‘Feminist Theory’, ‘Sexuality in Jewish Writings from 200 BCE to 200 CE’ and ‘Early Christian Sexuality’), the aim of each contribution is to engage both Greek and Roman cultures. While certainly some are very successful, like M.D. Stansbury-O’Donnell’s chapter ‘Desirability and the Body’, some appear unbalanced in their treatment of the evidence (e.g. ‘Biography’).

In general, H.’s Companion is a useful and informative resource for the study of ancient sexuality. While reviewers have already commented upon the errors within the book and the (sometimes poor) quality of the black-and-white photographs, they do not detract from the book’s overall value as a compendium and an excellent starting place. Alongside M.B. Skinner’s *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2014) (a book designed specifically for the classroom), one can utilise specific chapters within the Companion for upper-level lectures and seminars.

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## HISTORICAL HINDSIGHT

POWELL (A.) (ed.) *Hindsight in Greek and Roman History*. Pp. xvi + 228. Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2013. Cased, £50. ISBN: 978-1-905125-58-6.

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In my own monograph on the Second Punic War, I used counterfactual scenarios to explore whether or not Hannibal could have won the war had he chosen different paths at key junctures. One eminent scholar took exception to this, writing, ‘I do not believe such exercises have a place in our discipline’ (*AHR* 116 [2011], 1551–2). It is with some self-satisfaction, then, that I review the present edited volume. Its major theme is hindsight – how knowledge of the past and of the outcomes of events and processes influences the way historians, both ancient and modern, interpret and write about the past – yet a range of narrative techniques related to hindsight are discussed, especially the use of virtual or counterfactual history.

In Chapter 1, C. Pelling invokes the ‘what-if-Hitler-had-won’ genre to demonstrate that counterfactual history can effectively highlight the contingent nature of history. Pelling cites ways that ancient authors indicate historical contingency to differentiate between contingent processes and inevitable ones. Most famously Livy (9.17–19) employs counterfactual history, imagining what would have happened if Alexander had invaded Italy, to argue the inevitability of Rome’s rise, while Herodotus (7.139) speculates on what would have happened had the Athenians not stood up to Xerxes to emphasise just how close the Greeks

came to losing. Pelling concludes by speculating on what might have happened had Anthony and Cleopatra won at Actium.

In Chapter 2, E. Baragwanath argues that '... at key moments of his narrative, [Herodotus] downplays hindsight so as to transport the readers back to a moment in time when a different future loomed from the one that would actually eventuate' (p. 29). In other words, Herodotus delves into virtual history. Herodotus' many individual alternative narratives form part of a larger alternative narrative in which the Greeks lose and are enslaved by the Persians. This again emphasises the Athenians' critical role in saving Greece.

R. Brock picks up on this theme in Chapter 3. Focusing on the Sicilian Expedition, Brock demonstrates Thucydides utilising virtual history techniques to avoid presenting the outcome of the Sicilian Expedition, which would have been well known to his audience, as preordained. Brock includes an intriguing discussion on the goal of the Sicilian Expedition. Ancient authors and subsequently modern scholars have tended to assume that the goal was the subjugation of Sicily. Brock notes, however, that Thucydides' narrative suggests that Athenian planning was rather less coherent and, if anything, the Athenians sought a political settlement from the start.

In Chapter 4, L.I. Hau, drawing on the narratologist Gary Saul Morson, looks at the narrative techniques of foreshadowing, 'backshadowing' and 'sideshadowing' in several ancient authors. Historiographers of Rome's rise to power, namely Polybius and Livy, 'seem to have been especially prone to chronocentric backshadowing' (p. 74), as they present Roman conquest as almost inevitable, whereas Thucydides and Xenophon make much greater use of sideshadowing (which emphasises alternate historical possibilities) in their narratives. Hau suggests that ancient authors writing about events closer to their own time may have been more sensitive to historical contingency, while those writing about more distant events tended to view those developments as inevitable. Concerning Thucydides, he variously employs foreshadowing, backshadowing and sideshadowing to create a variety of moods and feelings in the reader at different narrative junctures.

In Chapter 5, H. Roche criticises modern scholars for judging the Spartans as inept or short-sighted for not anticipating the threat posed by Thebes in the run-up to the Battle of Leuctra. This evaluation is based on hindsight, and rooted in the ancient sources, especially Xenophon and Diodorus, who emphasise Spartan overconfidence and moral shortcoming. According to Roche, viewing the situation from the Spartan perspective in 371 B.C.E., the Spartans had every reason to feel confident, given their remarkable track record of victory to that point. I appreciate Roche's attempt to understand how affairs appeared to contemporary observers, whose perspective was not influenced by knowledge of Sparta's collapse. However, I found the chapter too critical of modern scholars who argue Spartan decline was inevitable. I disagree with her suggestion that investigations into Sparta's fall should necessarily consider whether it could have been predicted by observers in 371 B.C.E. with no further knowledge of history (p. 92). The advantage of the historian is precisely that he writes from the perspective of hindsight, and so can see how pieces in a historical process fit together in a way that contemporary observers often cannot. In other words, the historian can investigate the cause(s) of a historical process and the degree to which it was inevitable, without necessarily questioning whether contemporaries 'should have seen it coming', which is a separate historical question.

In Chapter 6, A. Meeus argues against the modern assumption that the disintegration of Alexander the Great's empire was inevitable because most of the Diadochoi preferred to carve out separate realms rather than maintain unity. According to Meeus, the Diadochoi generally had universalist ambitions, each aiming to be Alexander's successor. The empire fell apart not so much because 'separatist' successors won out over 'universalist' successors, but rather because no single successor could eliminate all his rivals and thus rule unopposed over a single Macedonian empire.

In Chapter 7, F.K. Maier looks at Polybius' use of virtual history, arriving at a somewhat different conclusion from Hau in Chapter 4. According to Maier, Polybius is not the backward-looking prophet who wrote history only from hindsight, as he is often characterised. Rather, Polybius frequently uses explicit and semi-explicit counterfactual remarks, and makes subtle use of sidetracking techniques, to underscore historical contingency. In this view, even Rome's rise to power is not shown as a neatly inevitable process, but rather Polybius depicts it as fraught with close calls and narrowly avoided disasters.

In Chapter 8, P. considers Octavian's rise to power from the perspective of contemporary observers. Modern scholars tend to minimise Octavian's defeat at Tauromenium in 36 B.C.E., because we know that Octavian eventually emerged victorious. P. speculates that had Octavian been captured or killed after Tauromenium, an alternate narrative about him likely would have survived that emphasised his military ineptitude and unworthiness to succeed Caesar. Something of this view peaks through in Cassius Dio's (49.41.2) report of Anthony's promotion of Caesarion as Caesar's true heir. Also, the death of Cleopatra is better understood if we recognise that the period after Actium would have been a nervous and unsure time for Romans. To kill or to spare Cleopatra presented certain political dangers, so Octavian may have arranged secretly for the queen's death.

Lastly, in Chapter 9, K. Low looks at the curious episode after Caligula's assassination when efforts were made to restore the Republic. This brief Republican outburst has been downplayed by historians because the movement failed to gain traction and the imperial system continued without further revolutionary moments. Low argues that the Republican movement in 41 C.E. was significant, and indeed the earliest account of the episode, by Josephus, paints it as a serious threat to the political continuity of the principate. Claudius' policies, however, made any subsequent republican effort less likely, and as the 'republican moment' grew more remote, the episode appears in the sources more as a blip in the inevitable trajectory of empire. Perhaps it is my own bias towards Roman history and the fact that I have ruminated on this episode myself ('could the Republic have been restored in 41 C.E.?' is a favourite virtual history question that I ask students in exams), but I found this chapter the most satisfying in the volume.

This is an excellent collection of essays, and it gives the reader much to think about. The volume, and the conference that spawned it, clearly reflect the narrative turn in ancient history and historiography. Hindsight in particular appears to be something of a hot topic (cf. J. Grethlein, *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: 'Future Past' from Herodotus to Augustine* [2013]). One suspects that this avenue of inquiry is only just opening up.

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## MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE IN ANCIENT RELIGION

CUSUMANO (N.), GASPARINI (V.), MASTROCINQUE (A.), RÜPKE (J.) (edd.)  
*Memory and Religious Experience in the Greco-Roman World.*  
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