

Greek History

The interaction between Greeks and non-Greeks is an increasingly popular subject among Greek historians, as shown by four important books reviewed here: their significance lies in the various challenges that they pose to the still dominant structuralist approach, which focuses on polarity and alterity and privileges certain discourses in literary texts over the diversity encountered when one examines the totality of the evidence. All four books put at the centre of their attention the significance and consequences of real-life encounters and interactions between people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Denise Demetriou discusses the range of interactions that took place in Mediterranean *emporía* between the seventh and fourth centuries BCE.¹ *Emporia* were settlements created to facilitate cross-cultural trade, and the book examines five of them, spread across the Mediterranean: Emporion in Spain, Gravisca in Etruria, Naucratis in Egypt, Pistiros in Thrace, and Piraeus in the Aegean. At the centre of Demetriou's attention is the interconnection between cross-cultural trade, state supervision, cross-cultural communication, and the formation of cultural, ethnic, and religious identities. She stresses the issue of the translatability of practices and ideas created in such multicultural settlements, convincingly arguing that the shared Mediterranean maritime connectivity and the many structural similarities in terms of political organization, material culture, and polytheistic cults both enabled cross-cultural interactions in the *emporía* and further facilitated cross-cultural accommodation. A second important point concerns Greek identities: Demetriou makes a powerful case for interactions in the *emporía* among Greeks from various communities and between Greeks and various non-Greeks playing a crucial role in the emergence and development of the various forms of Greek identity. She stresses both the salience of civic identity and the development of wider regional and ethnic identities in the context of the *emporía*; in both cases, religion played a crucial role in reinforcing identities and creating communities.

Traditional accounts posit that Greek identity and Greek ethnography were crystallized around the time of the Persian Wars and in explicit contrast to the image of the Barbarian Other. In a very important book, Joseph Skinner presents a persuasive alternative to this account.² Examining the full range of archaic sources, he makes a convincing argument that the interest in and comparison with foreign cultures was something that Greeks clearly undertook during the archaic period, thus predating by a long time the Persian Wars. His second argument is that ethnography should not be seen in the restricted sense of the Greek study of non-Greek cultures, but in the wider sense of 'thinking about culture from the point of view of an outsider' (16); Skinner makes a powerful argument as to why this conceptualization is much closer to the way in which the Greeks practised ethnography. But most significantly he shows how the practice of ethnography was not something restricted to the

¹ *Negotiating Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean. The Archaic and Classical Greek Multiethnic Emporia*. By Denise Demetriou. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xiv + 292. 3 maps, 17 figures. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-01944-7.

² *The Invention of Greek Ethnography. Ethnography and History from Homer to Herodotus*. By Joseph Skinner. New York, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 343. 16 illustrations. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-19-979360-0.

ethnographer. Instead, the works and views of the ethnographers were based on a widespread practice of ethnography from all groups of society, in the most varied circumstances, and with the most different extents of knowledge and engagement. Skinner documents the various forms and means by which ethnography was practised and communicated, from the recital of lists and the exchange of objects to conversations in the tavern or aboard ship, the visual engagement with objects and monuments, and the consumption of goods. This is an important book with significant implications for the study of Greek historiography and ethnography and the exploration of identity formation and intercultural encounters in antiquity.

The impact of the Persian Empire on the mosaic of cultures and societies of Asia Minor is the subject of a new book by Elspeth Dusinberre.³ It provides a thorough and very valuable survey of the material and visual culture of Achaemenid Anatolia, focusing in particular on the practices of eating and drinking, tending the dead, and worshipping the gods. This survey is framed by a discussion of the administrative and military presence of the Persian Empire in Asia Minor on the one hand, and the 'educational' processes through which imperial authority and local autonomy shaped material culture and the expression of identities on the other. What emerges are three main points. First, Anatolia under the Persian Empire did not experience the 'Persianization' of local identities and material cultures, but a complex interaction between diverse local elements and elements drawn from a variety of 'foreign' currents (Persian, Greek, Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, etc.). Second, this process of interaction led to the formation of a shared Anatolian elite *koine*, which emphasized banqueting, hunting, and ritual activities. Third, the impact of Persian authority and material culture is much more visible in portable objects such as seal-stones, vessels, and jewellery rather than tombstones, architecture, and sculpture. The book thus raises the important question of the diverse ways in which different kinds of empires affect local cultures; future research will need to address this issue with a more comparative perspective.

Matthew Sears has written a stimulating book about the interaction between Athens and Thrace.⁴ He focuses on the *Thrakophoitai* ('haunters of Thrace'), Athenians who habitually visited and resided in Thrace, cultivated strong links with the area, and were fond of things Thracian. Sears' wider case rests on two major arguments: on the one hand, that the nature of the egalitarian and democratic Athenian *polis* created severe limits for members of the Athenian elite who wished to follow an unbridled aristocratic lifestyle, and who, consequently, found in Thrace an alternative social space that allowed them to pursue such a lifestyle; on the other, that the experiences of these *Thrakophoitai* had a significant impact on Athenian history, affecting aspects from military practice and theory to artistic production and religious devotion. Accordingly, Athenian history needs to incorporate the world of Thrace as an important factor in the shaping of Athenian practices and values. The book provides a detailed examination of the careers and presence of a significant number of Athenian

³ *Empire, Authority and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia*. By Elspeth R. M. Dusinberre. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xxvi + 374. 131 b/w illustrations, 20 maps, 3 tables. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-01826-6.

⁴ *Athens, Thrace, and the Shaping of Athenian Leadership*. By Matthew A. Sears. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi + 328. 5 b/w illustrations, 2 maps. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-03053-4.

politicians and generals in Thrace, from Peisistratus and the Philaids in the sixth century, through Thucydides and Alcibiades, to Xenophon and Iphicrates in the fourth; it also explores the ways in which Thracian culture might have been appealing to those Athenians, alongside the innovations in Athenian military practice as a result of their experiences. While the image of an egalitarian Athens pushing members of its elite into pursuing an alternative lifestyle abroad is rather problematic, overall this is a book that makes a convincing case for the historical significance of Greek–Barbarian interactions.

This brings us to three other books about classical Athens. Back in the 1960's Moses Finley recommended the abandonment of the simplistic sociology of slave, serf, and freeman in favour of a spectrum-of-statuses approach, based on differential access to a range of rights and obligations. Schizophrenically, however, he went on to argue that in classical Greece the spectrum of statuses that existed in other societies was eliminated in favour of a single distinction between free and slave. Following Finley, most Greek historians have worked with a simplified division between citizens, metics, and slaves; but in a highly valuable book Deborah Kamen returns to Finley's original suggestion in order to show the existence of a spectrum of statuses in classical Athens.⁵ She examines ten status groups, ranging from chattel slaves, privileged slaves, and freedmen with conditional freedom, through metics, privileged metics, and bastards, to groups with varying citizen rights (disenfranchised citizens, naturalized citizens, and female and male citizens). Kamen persuasively shows that the ideological distinction between slaves, metics, and citizens actually masks a significant diversity of status groups in classical Athens. Particularly important is the incorporation in her analysis of both status differences enshrined in law and the rights, privileges, and disadvantages that people enjoyed or faced in practice or by custom. Athens was both more inclusive (giving some share in its various institutions to non-citizens) and less egalitarian than its ideology assumed (given the distinctions between different citizen groups). The conclusions of this slim book will be essential reading for future research on Athenian social, economic, and political history.

David Pritchard examines the interesting paradox of the popularity of aristocratic athletics in democratic Athens.⁶ He shows the elite nature of athletics by arguing that athletic training would be restricted to the elite, and documents the overwhelmingly positive attitude of Athenian 'popular' sources towards athletes and athletics, despite the fact that other elite practices were often criticized in 'popular' sources. Given the common culture of sports and war, which Pritchard examines in detail, he seeks in what he describes as 'the democratisation of war' from the late sixth century onwards the explanation of why the Athenian lower classes put a high value on the elite pursuit of athletics. These interesting findings are somewhat mitigated by a rather schematic distinction between elite and popular culture (with tragedy and comedy counting as popular literature) and between the elite and the poor (with 95% of Athenians counting as poor who struggled to send their children to school). But the biggest problem is that

⁵ *Status in Classical Athens*. By Deborah Kamen. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi + 144. Hardback £24.95, ISBN: 978-0-691-13813-8.

⁶ *Sport, Democracy and War in Classical Athens*. By David M. Pritchard. Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 251. 10 b/w illustrations. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-00733-8.

Pritchard does not examine the value of athletics as spectacle, an aspect which clearly differentiated sport from other elite activities such as hunting and the symposium.

Matthew Christ explores the role of helping in Athenian democracy.⁷ He persuasively counters recent idealizing studies of Athenian behaviour by showing that the Athenians felt obliged to help primarily relatives and friends; that they conceived the ideal of their democratic citizenship as living in harmony and avoiding harming other citizens, rather than actively helping them; that Athenian sources instead emphasized a reciprocal exchange of help between the citizens and the *polis* and its institutions; and that Athenian foreign policy was primarily motivated by Athenian interests, rather than altruistic urges to help others. These conclusions are undoubtedly correct, but the real question is 'As compared to what?' For how many large-scale societies does this not apply? Even more, Christ shows himself the co-existence of other discourses in other contexts, from Plato's stress of help among citizens in his ideal *polis* to the way in which public advisors presented themselves as altruistic helpers of their city; and the appeal of the image of Athens as an altruistic helper of the wronged, even if more ideal than practice, remains largely unaccountable. These issues could be further explored within a wider discussion of the interaction between discourses and practices of reciprocity and solidarity in antiquity. In this respect, readers would profit by consulting alongside this book Seth Schwartz's *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society?*⁸

From classical Athens we move on to Joseph Roisman's bottom-up history of Alexander's veterans, with a particular focus on the Silver Shields and the wars of Eumenes.⁹ Traditionally, scholarship has focused on Alexander and his Successors, and the soldiers who constituted their armies have merely played the role of human fodder in historical accounts. Roisman aims to study early Hellenistic history from the point of view of Alexander's veterans; this is a difficult task, not only because we have no contemporary sources but also because the sources largely adopt an elitist approach of identifying with the point of view of the commanders. Roisman accordingly engages with detailed source criticism in order to understand the behaviour and identify the motives of the veterans. He argues persuasively that the veterans were not mercenaries who would simply follow the highest bidder. Rather, a series of political and ideological factors (their service with Alexander, their loyalty to the Macedonian royal house, or their sense of justice) played a significant role in determining their loyalty; the veterans followed their various commanders provided the latter could demonstrate ability to succeed and could care for veterans' needs. However, the veterans were not independent actors and failed to create their own leadership; but Roisman stresses nicely how in crises where the leadership was divided, the actions and interests of the veterans could play a decisive role in determining the result.

⁷ *The Limits of Altruism in Democratic Athens*. By Matthew R. Christ. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 215. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-02977-4.

⁸ S. Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism* (Princeton, NJ, 2010).

⁹ *Alexander's Veterans and the Early Wars of the Successors*. By Joseph Roisman. Austin, TX, University of Texas Press, 2012. Fordyce W. Mitchel Memorial Lecture Series. Pp. xvi + 264. 1 illustration, 2 maps. Hardback £38, ISBN: 978-0-292-73596-5; paperback £25.85, ISBN: 978-0-292-75431-7.

The age of the Successors leads to the Hellenistic period, onto which new light is thrown by three recent epigraphic studies. The first one is an important collection of sixteen essays on epigraphical approaches to the post-classical *polis*, edited by Paraskevi Martzavou and Nikolaos Papazarkadas.¹⁰ The essays range widely in form, from presentation of unpublished material (from Siphnos, Athens, and Thespiai), through discussion focusing on specific important documents (Pistiros, Priene, Chersonesus Taurica, Lampsakos and Parion, Chios, and Demetrias), to essays devoted to a particular form of inscription (subscription lists, inscribed honorific statues), and, finally, discussions of wider issues based on a range of epigraphic sources (Sicilian identity, games, the *neoi*, philosophy of education). The essays examine the light that inscriptions throw on the complex life of Hellenistic and early imperial Greek cities. A common theme across a number of the papers concerns the interaction between *poleis* and the wider world: the interaction between the *polis*, local populations, and imperial powers at Priene; the complex triangulation between Greek *poleis* and their merchants, an *emporion* in Thrace, and a Thracian king; the role of ruler/founder cult in mediating between Demetrias and the Macedonian rulers; the role of mythology in formulating the relationship between Chios and Rome; the impact of Roman practices on the judicial institutions of Chersonesus Taurica; and the formation of regional forms of identity in Sicily. Another stimulating theme concerns the various ideological discourses that permeate inscriptions as documents of communal life: the ideological and performative aspects of subscription lists; the philosophy of education presented in honorific decrees; and the ideology of honorific monuments.

Elizabeth Meyer presents a new account of the history of the Molossians and Epirus on the basis of a re-dating of the epigraphic evidence from Dodona that has constituted the main source of historical reconstruction.¹¹ She sensibly proposes, based on epigraphic and other historical criteria, to lower to the third century BCE the dates of many inscriptions that have traditionally been attributed to the fourth century. This re-dating has significant consequences for the traditional narrative of Epirote history, which sees a Molossian federal state (*koinon*) expanding in the course of the fourth century and incorporating the greater part of Epirus into a wider *koinon*. Meyer proposes an alternative narrative that attributes a central role to the Aeacid dynasty gradually creating a series of alliances with neighbouring communities, which were transformed into a federal state only in the aftermath of the abolition of monarchy in 232 BCE. This is a plausible account, but while Meyer shows the weakness of many earlier arguments based on mis- or over-interpretations of epigraphic, literary, and numismatic sources, not all of her own arguments are equally convincing (as, for example, when she argues that the swearing of an oath between the Epirotes and the Aeacid king – to the effect that if the king respected the laws they would maintain the kingship – implies that the Epirotes were mere allies of the king and not his subjects; 58–60).

¹⁰ *Epigraphical Approaches to the Post-Classical Polis. Fourth Century BC to Second Century AD*. Edited by Paraskevi Martzavou and Nikolaos Papazarkadas. Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xx + 370. 27 illustrations. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-965214-3.

¹¹ *The Inscriptions of Dodona and a New History of Molossia*. By Elizabeth A. Meyer. Heidelberg Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 54. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013. Pp. 201. 29 b/w illustrations; 15 b/w plates. Paperback £37.16, ISBN: 978-3-515-10311-4.

Epigraphy and archaeology are strongly connected disciplines: this is particularly true of inscribed inventories, which provide such rich information concerning a wide range of objects unearthed by archaeologists, but whose interpretation is also deeply dependent on archaeological evidence for their elucidation. In a very useful study, Clarisse Prêtre provides us with a detailed examination of the terms for jewellery that appear in the inventories of dedications of the Delian temple of Apollo.¹² Classical and Hellenistic choices of deposition of valuable objects in archaeological contexts mean that we have a rather limited range of surviving Greek jewellery from these periods. Prêtre analyses sixty terms for jewellery that appear in the Delian inventories, discusses the linguistic evidence of literary texts and inscriptions, and attempts to correlate them with known archaeological specimens. The result offers a wealth of fascinating information but one might be surprised how rarely term and object can be securely identified. This makes the utility of this study particularly significant for a wide range of specialists but also shows the various problems in correlating epigraphical terms and archaeological evidence.

Finally, two studies are devoted to Greek historiography and biography. Emily Baragwanath and Mathieu de Bakker have edited an important book on the role of myth and truth in Herodotus' narrative.¹³ The volume examines the interaction between three elements: Herodotus' critical enquiry in search of the truth about the past; the mythical tales transmitted through the oral and the poetic tradition; and the traditional motifs/patterns of these tales (which Herodotus can use apart from the tales in order to emplot his historical narrative). While the traditional examination of Herodotus' rationalization and critical stance towards myths features throughout, the volume also explores several other aspects of the presence of myth in his account. A stimulating common theme is the discussion of how myth is employed by Herodotus' characters to account for their actions and to explain their world; particularly interesting is the exploration of how Herodotus uses myth and its motifs in order to deepen his audience's understanding of the historical events and patterns he narrates. Finally, many contributions examine the varying levels of myth and truth, the ways these were embedded in the stories that Herodotus came across, and the ways in which Herodotus modifies them to suit his diverse authorial agendas; one should single out a number of chapters that discuss Herodotus' treatment of myths attributed to non-Greeks and the particular problems that such stories presented for a Greek audience.

Jeffrey Beneker provides a stimulating exploration of the relationship between *Eros* and politics in Plutarch's *Lives*.¹⁴ He studies the ways in which *Eros*, in its various manifestations, is employed by Plutarch as a means of exploring the motivation and behaviour of the subjects of his biographies. Beneker discusses the philosophical background

¹² *Kosmos et kosmema. Les offrandes de parure dans les inventaires déliens*. By Clarisse Prêtre. *Kernos Supplement 27*. Athens: Centre d'Etude de la Religion Grecque Antique, 2012. Pp. 269. 9 colour plates. Paperback €30, ISBN: 978-2-87562-006-4.

¹³ *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*. Edited by Emily Baragwanath and Mathieu de Bakker. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 370. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-969397-9.

¹⁴ *The Passionate Statesman. Eros and Politics in Plutarch's Lives*. By Jeffrey Beneker. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 258. Hardback £58, ISBN: 978-0-19-969590-4.

of Plutarch's approach to *Eros*, before exploring how Plutarch uses the theme of the interrelationship between passions and politics in the three pairs of Alexander/Caesar, Demetrius/Antony, and Agesilaus/Pompey. As Beneker shows, Plutarch's *Lives* examine whether his protagonists managed to control their desires or let them drive them; a second important theme for Plutarch is whether they managed to separate their moral weaknesses in their private lives from their actions in public, or failed to do so. Of particular interest is Beneker's argument that the concept of *Eros* provided Plutarch with the opportunity to interpret historical events for which his sources either had no explanation or failed to account for them persuasively. This is explored through a very stimulating discussion of the Pelopidas/Marcellus pair, showing how Plutarch used the theme to explain the deaths of these generals on the battlefield.

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Roman History

A quality not much considered here in the past, how often a work is likely to be taken from the shelf, prompts me to put Saskia's Hin's *The Demography of Roman Italy*¹ in first position. For that depends in turn on how reliable, clear, and broad of outlook the chapters are, and where they lead the reader. Though dry and plain it might seem (for all the developing technologies), the subject moves directly towards a hot, polarized topic – 'the Roman economy' and its development – with oscillation between extreme positions. It is a particular merit, then, to put forward a fresh view (though previously adumbrated elsewhere) that is not extreme and must be taken seriously. That is where Hin will take historians. But the book is structured in three sections: economic and ecological parameters, demographic parameters (morality, fertility, and migration), and population size. The separate chapters are well supported from a variety of evidence, judiciously treated and well written up. That on climate, with a mildly positive conclusion, needed no apology. If I have a complaint it is about the index: dive into a passage involving 'Brass modelling' and you will have to rummage back in the text (111) for hope of identifying it.

The word 'laminated' occurred in two ways on feeling the texture of *Polybius and His World*, edited by Bruce Gibson and Thomas Harrison.² First, it began in 2007 as a celebration of an eminent historian, who through technology was able to appear *in absentia*, and it has gracefully become *Essays in Memory of F. W. Walbank*, with a penetrating essay on his intellectual and political development by the editors, backed up with John Henderson's hypnotic account of dealings with the Press (Kenneth Sisam, advised by

¹ *The Demography of Roman Italy. Population Dynamics in an Ancient Conquest Society 201 BCE–14 CE*. By Saskia Hin. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv + 406. 2 maps, 18 figures, 22 tables. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-00393-4.

² *Polybius and His World. Essays in Memory of F. W. Walbank*. Edited by Bruce Gibson and Thomas Harrison. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi + 416. 1 plate. Hardback £85, ISBN 978-0-19-960840-9.