

collection of material). The medical discussion focuses on the issue of adapting the treatment to the patient and not simply always giving the same amount of any medicine. Linking the two discussions is the question of the limits to the exact sciences and what gets classified as susceptible to precise answers and what not.

Chapter III begins with a discussion of the difference between the weighing of souls in the *Iliad* and Christian imagery of the scales of the Last Judgement, but its primary concern is with the discourse, and in particular the comic discourse, about cheating when weighing. A large number of passages of Old Comedy whose elucidation is problematic are discussed here, with particular attention paid to how to interpret *-κρῶσις* words.

The final chapter returns to questions of origins—where terms for weights and measures derive from, and the development of systems of weights and measures. G. stresses the derivation of units from body parts and other natural analogies, common to Greek and many other metrological systems, and explores at length the way in which things are measured in Homer, developing the observation of Geoffrey Lloyd (in *Polarity and Analogy* [Cambridge, 1966]) that distances and areas get expressed in terms of lengths of time, but also discussing at length the question of the nature of the Homeric talent. Issues of the relationship between power and measurement are taken up again in the discussion of the authority needed to impose systems of measures (with a rather out-of-date discussion of the Athenian Standards Decree; G. is not interested in coins as such), and the book ends with a discussion of standard measures and officials responsible for seeing to their use.

As this summary indicates, this is a book with a number of recurrent themes (the equivocal attitude to measurement, reservations about what can be measured and whether measurements can be relied upon, and the relationship between measurement and political power) but with no overall story. Although most of the discussions put material into chronological order, there is no attempt to analyse the historical background to the texts used or to correlate their attitudes to measurement to other philosophical or ethical positions that they adopt. The value of the book lies primarily in the material it collects (with Greek texts always given). There is an excellent *index locorum* and an Index of Modern Authors, but no general index.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

ROBIN OSBORNE

LESLIE KURKE: *Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold. The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece*. Pp. xxi + 384, 9 ills. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Paper, £18.95. ISBN: 0-691-00736-5.

Currency, prostitution, games, and trade: Herodotus' (1.94) main features of Lydian culture stand at the beginning of this book. Kurke sets out to explore the significance of these cultural phenomena in the Archaic period, and she arrives at a refreshing way of reading Herodotus and archaic poetry.

The first part of K.'s study shows currency as an important aspect of the cultural change that takes place in the Archaic period, and therefore as powerful symbolic capital within the discourse between different groups affected by this change. This is well illustrated in her chapter on the 'language of metals', especially the use of metaphors connected to metals, the testing of metal, and the forging of coins, in the definition of the ideal individual: much of this language reflects a world view that regards metals and the ancient pattern of gift exchange as positive while coinage is suspicious.

The next three chapters deal with attitudes and opinions that can be extracted from Herodotus' work. By detailed analysis of apparently absurd stories and more or less hidden value judgements, K. shows how ideals of an aristocratic élite and of 'the people' sometimes clash in the traditions collected in the *Histories*—an effect at times exploited by Herodotus to hint at his own opinion with a good deal of irony. Issues central to the conflict between traditional élites and groups within the city that desired a more broadly based government can therefore be traced in the text. Various expressions of gift exchange and the aristocratic lifestyle more in general are of vital interest here, and K. manages to present many stories in Herodotus as critical caricatures of élite behaviour.

The second part of the book starts with a study of prostitution in the Archaic period, and archaic poetry moves centre-stage as prime comparative material to Herodotus' *Histories*. K. can show an interesting contrast between the *hetaira* as a symbol for the aristocratic lifestyle, especially the symposion, and the *pornē* as an 'institution' of the city and an expression of ideas

about equal rights for every citizen; a dichotomy that is paralleled by the symbolic values attached to metals and coins. As it turns out, modes of distributing women within a society serve to illustrate ideas within the political discourse. The next chapter considers games, in particular the contrast between opinions about some established games and possibly newly emerging ones. The last chapter returns to coinage and the language of metals: it shows how Athens, the established democratic city, reverses the old symbols and uses terms connected with her reliable silver coinage to express the values that define her ideal citizen.

This book is a truly engaging study of texts, Herodotus, and the archaic poets; the level of complexity reached in telling apart different layers of meaning is impressive and leads to results that illuminate vital aspects of archaic culture(s). At times the reader might find the argument reaches a degree of sophistication that is difficult to follow. When Herodotus has to stand for three different strands of the argument, let us call them conservative, progressive, and his own opinion, it becomes hard to tell whose voice he is using at any particular moment; moreover, elite ideals and popular ideas cannot have been clearly defined at any given time. The interpretation of fragmentary works of some archaic poets whose whole corpus may just consist of a few dozen lines also causes problems, especially when the possible meaning of a particular passage has to be reconstructed through a complex combination of arguments (e.g. p. 226). Nevertheless, K.'s method of 'oblique reading' is valid, and it leads to results that are interesting and relevant. The study of ancient games is least convincing: here K. has to deal with very vague sources from all periods of antiquity, and her photograph of game pieces cut from geometric pottery seems an odd choice when juxtaposed with her argument that competitive board games (reconstructed on very shaky ground) are comparatively late and reflect the new ideals of the *polis*.

At the end of her introduction (p. 37) K. claims that her study is divided into two parts, the first concerned with discourse, and potentially more interesting to literary scholars, the second dealing with 'the lowly stuff of culture', and therefore more attractive to historians and archaeologists. This division seems artificial: the basic source material remains the same, and so does the method. It is true, K. does use the evidence of Attic vases, especially for her discussions of *hetairai*, but this aspect of her study remains somewhat marginal. It would, in fact, be worthwhile to test her image of archaic society and culture change by reference to the archaeological evidence, for example by looking at the changing iconography on Attic vases or dedicatory habits in sanctuaries and, more generally, objects of prestige. In any case, more illustrations would have been an improvement; pictorial evidence seems restricted to the bare minimum, or less: not all vases discussed in detail are shown (e.g. pp. 205ff.), and some comparative examples would have been useful, especially where alternative iconographies are discussed in the text (pp. 199, 272). The traditional dichotomy between literary- and material culture-based studies of the ancient world is continued, rather than remedied, by K.'s work.

All in all, *Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold* definitely constitutes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the archaic world. A study that manages to correlate social, economic, and ideological aspects of cultural change in a coherent way should be welcomed; even more so if it manages to demonstrate a complicated method in an intelligible way (jargon is mainly restricted to the introduction). Finally, since K. says (p. xi) that her work is *not* a book about Herodotus, her successful illustration of the sophisticated arguments and ironic wit of that author should be considered as a very positive side-effect of her efforts.

St John's College, Oxford

MARIA PRETZLER

F. S. RUSSELL: *Information Gathering in Classical Greece*. Pp. viii + 267. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999. Cased, £31. ISBN: 0-472-11064-0.

Between introduction (pp. 1–9) and conclusion (pp. 226–34) R. covers tactical (pp. 10–62) and strategic information (pp. 63–102), spies (pp. 103–39), how information was conveyed and interpreted (pp. 140–89), and counterintelligence (pp. 190–225). There are two appendices ('Objects of Verbs of Learning', pp. 237–8, and 'Types of *Kataskopoi*', p. 239) and a useful glossary (pp. 241–3).

This book is well researched, well written, and overall well produced (occasionally works cited in the notes do not appear in the bibliography, e.g. Hirsch at p.110 n. 17). It takes a revisionist line on an interesting subject, arguing that the Greeks were keenly interested in and reasonably efficient at information gathering, *contra* the prevailing view of, say, Adcock or Pritchett.

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