ERSKINE (A.) and LLEWELLYN-JONES (L.) *Eds* **Creating a Hellenistic World**. Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2011. Pp. xx + 355. £55. 9781905125432.
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What with the almost insatiable appetite for 'Companions' and excellent general studies such as Graham Shipley's or more recently Malcolm Errington's, I think it is fair to say we are sufficiently well supplied for the moment with synthetic treatments of the Hellenistic world. It is a pleasure, then, to read the present volume with its more specialist articles. The editors have collected a winning team, with experienced players in their accustomed positions and one or two newcomers, all offering new interpretations over an enticing range of history, literature and material culture. The uniting theme is the beginnings of the Hellenistic world, and the chapters on the whole stick to that brief.

I liked best part 1, 'New worlds', and part 5, 'Changing aesthetics'. Alexander is the obvious starting point, and as the only Classical scholar to have ridden in battle with Alexander, R. Lane Fox was surely the right person to introduce the king as 'The first Hellenistic man'. His chapter is introductory in that it discusses very widely the patterns of thought and behaviour that Alexander established both in the ancient and modern worlds, but it is also characteristically combative, an effective scene-setter, and, as always, a pleasure to read. The only other individual studied in the volume is the little known third-century Stoic philosopher, Persaios of Kition. A. Erskine uses the surviving stories about him very cleverly to paint an interesting portrait of a man faced with a most Hellenistic and New World dilemma, torn between court politics and the philosophical life. Persaios is probably better off here than where he turns up in part 4, 'The court'. *Koine* Greek is another fundamental element of the Hellenistic world, and S. Colvin's chapter on its constructed nature is a healthy corrective to many of our lazy assumptions. The *Letter of Aristeas* might appear less obviously foundational, but Alexandrian scholarship was certainly part of the New World, as was Judaism's close encounter with Greekness. The *Letter* symbolizes both, and R. Hunter's placing of it in the discourse of Greek fiction provides one of the most interesting approaches to Aristeas for a long time.

Things like aesthetics and art (religion too) traditionally bring up the rear at the end of a volume like this. I am not in favour of it. It smacks too much of political priorities: having dealt with the important things, here is a nice, relaxing way to finish. Actually the volume could easily have started with the excellent studies of J. Porter on Hellenistic refinement (*leptotes*) and P. Schultz on the Hellenistic Baroque. Both are challenging and thought-provoking articles.

For the rest, part 2, 'Rulers and subjects', is the most diffuse. I suppose in disappearing from the New World J. Roisman's Silver Shields say something about it, but while it is careful and detailed scholarship, I am not sure it fits as well as other articles. The transition of Egypt from a Persian province to a Successor kingdom is, as you would expect, deftly analysed by A. Lloyd. Alexander may have seemed like a better deal than the Persians, but how deep did acceptance of foreign rulers go? A century down the road and the whole of southern Egypt seceded from the Ptolemies. J. Wieshöfer's nice study of Persis reminds us that there is still much to do at the eastern end of the Hellenistic world.

Part 3, 'The polis', is pleasingly compact. H.-U. Riemer on Rhodes and S. Wallace on Plataia go together well. Again, both deal with the past as a formative influence on the new world. Rhodes' image as a sort of UN peace-keeping force hides their hankering after hegemony and independence, as symbolized by the Colossus. The dream came to an end with Roman dominance, as did so many other Hellenistic dreams. Wallace, a new recruit to Hellenistic scholarship, belies his inexperience with an expert demonstration of how Plataia was appropriated for different purposes in the fourth and third centuries as a symbol of unity, freedom and war against the barbarian.

If Persiaos of Kition had been allowed to represent the 'New Worlds' of part 1, then women could have formed all of part 4, 'The court'. E. Carney distinguishes carefully between what was common to royal Hellenistic women and what was specific; D. Ogden offers another fine angle on courtesans and kings; and L. Llewellyn-Jones and S. Winder argue for Berenike's alignment with Hathor. Three top-class articles on women in the new Hellenistic world.

This is a very good volume. Perhaps I could end with a paian of praise for the editor of The Classical Press of Wales. He has never sought the limelight, but he has done wonderful service to the discipline in providing a home for an extraordinary range of Classical scholarship.

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