

BOOK REVIEW

A Companion to Ancient Macedonia. Edited by JOSEPH ROISMAN and IAN WORTHINGTON. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Chichester and Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xxvi + 668; 16 pp. of plates. Hardcover, £120.00/\$199.95. ISBN 978-1-4051-7936-2.

That we have a *Companion* devoted to Ancient Macedonia is hardly surprising. Alexander the Great remains a cottage industry, but the field of Macedonian studies is currently thriving on its own. Joseph Roisman and Ian Worthington, the editors of this *Companion*, set out to demonstrate this vitality by including a wide range of topics all written for readers who are new to the field, whether as students or general readers. They have succeeded in assembling a large helping of the current state of the field and have drawn on an international array of authors. However, the omission of any discussion of archaeology is even more surprising than the failure to include a single chapter by a Greek or other Balkan scholar. As a result of these gaps, readers who want more comprehensive coverage of the field should supplement this volume with several other surveys and *Companions*.

Because of space constraints I will briefly summarize each chapter and discuss the merits of the whole. Edward Anson opens the volume with an introductory chapter that places the field as a whole and the *Companion's* chapters in a context. P. J. Rhodes opens the section on evidence by covering the literary and epigraphic evidence, such as it is, for pre-Roman Macedonia. Karsten Dahmen provides a well-organized discussion of the numismatic evidence arranged by tribes, cities, kings, and province. He closes with a case study examination of Roman coinage in the province. Two chapters on evidence may highlight how few the sources are for the region, but to omit archaeology is inexplicable and leaves the volume deeply flawed.

Physical environment and ethnicity are the focus of the following part. Carol Thomas considers the physical environment and early population movements in a chapter that is clear, but needs a better map. Johannes Engels addresses the topic of ethnicity relating to Greeks and Macedonians. Sulochana Asirvatham continues the ethnicity theme, in part, by addressing Greek, Roman, Persian, and Egyptian perspectives on Macedonians. Engel's observation, "ancient identities

and concepts of ethnicity are historically and socially complex and fluid constructions,” (82) is worth remembering when reading the chapters focused on ethnicity.

The editors divided the historical narrative into convenient, useful chapters: early Temenid kings down to Alexander I (Slawomir Sprawski), Alexander I to Perdiccas III (Joseph Roisman), Philip II (Sabine Müller), Alexander III (Ian Worthington and Dawn Gilley), 323–221 BCE (W. Lindsay Adams), Macedonia and Rome to 146 (Arthur Eckstein), and provincial Macedonia to 3rd century CE (John Vanderspoel). The chapters are clear and provide good coverage. The only jarring aspect is that Carolyn Snively’s chapter on Late Antique Macedonia is separated from the rest of the history by more than ten chapters. Late Antiquity should be included. Segregating this chapter was an unfortunate choice.

Several of Macedonia’s ancient neighbors receive attention. Bill Greenwalt takes on Illyria and Epirus, Denver Graninger covers Thessaly, Zosia Archibald handles Thrace, and Marek Jan Olbrycht cleans up with Persia. Each of these chapters provides readers with a good introduction to the periphery in relation to the Macedonian center. Such a center–periphery view is useful (and necessary in the context of this *Companion*), but such an approach is entirely in contrast to the viewpoint of most of our literary sources.

Readers in search of chapters on institutions, society, and culture find them in the penultimate section. Topics included here are kingship and politics (Carol King), elite society (Noriko Sawada), women (Elizabeth Carney), religion (Paul Christesen and Sarah Murray), army (Nicholas Sekunda), economy (Paul Millett), art to 221 BCE (Craig Hardiman), and art to 337 CE (Rachel Kousser). These authors necessarily deal with elite Macedonians primarily and, given the space limits, must be selective in the evidence and historiography they include. As with so many of the other chapters, readers will find in these useful introductions to the material.

The final section of the *Companion* carries the title “After Rome” and includes only two chapters. As noted previously, Snively’s informative chapter on Late Antique Macedonia to 586 CE belongs with the rest of the historical narrative since to do otherwise conveys to the intended audience the impression that this history is somehow different or exceptional. The concluding chapter, by Loring Danforth, is an extended discussion of how ancient Macedonia is embroiled in modern Balkan politics. This chapter on a modern topic is out of place in a *Companion* otherwise focused on ancient Macedonia.

In addition to the chapters, there are twenty-eight color plates, four line drawings, ten maps, a bibliography, and index. Eleven of the plates are coins. These images are all well produced and they provide a taste of what is available for readers who dig into the topics. The maps are all together at the beginning of the volume, but the details and even the scales (when available) vary widely rendering them less effective as a group than they might have been.

Given the intended audience, the *Companion* is successful, as far as it goes. The volume was designed to introduce ancient Macedonia to students and other readers unfamiliar with the field. Except for the last chapter, the selected authors succeed in meeting that goal. They are clear and provide students with the information they need to explore aspects of the field. They also include numerous footnotes and bibliography so readers who wish to explore these topics in more depth can do so on their own. Teachers seeking material for writing introductory lectures will find some of it here, although those working on heavily debated topics, like Macedonian kingship, will need to supplement with works cited in footnotes and bibliography. Although it is expensive currently, the material will be available electronically and the paperback edition will be more affordable if it follows the trend of other Blackwell *Companions*.

There are some editorial choices that detract from the *Companion's* overall success. Editors must naturally compromise in selecting authors and topics, but it is remarkable in a volume on ancient Macedonia that there are no Greek or other Balkan scholars from regional institutions represented among the authors. One expects that regional scholars have much to provide both in terms of content and point of view that would enrich the *Companion*. Archibald's chapter has the distinction of being the only one to draw heavily on Greek-language work. This editorial choice in authors may be connected with the volume's preoccupation with ethnicity. It is perhaps illuminating that a quarter of the introduction addresses ethnicity in one way or another while three of the internal chapters focus heavily on ethnicity. The emphasis placed on this topic gives the mistaken impression that it receives more attention from scholars than do other issues.

The focus on ethnicity is even more surprising when one finds the complete exclusion of an extended discussion of archaeology. Although Roisman and Worthington conclude (xiv), "we have covered as much as humanly can be within one set of covers and that the book," such a over-statement seems intended to be tongue-in-cheek given the absence of archaeology. That omission is inexplicable given the importance of archaeological evidence. Some of the authors draw on prior archaeological work, but without an overarching examination it is diffi-

cult for the intended audience to appreciate the role of archaeology and archaeological evidence in our evolving understanding of the region. Every such volume involves many editorial choices, but in this case this omission resulted in numerous missed opportunities. This *Companion* is a useful volume, but should be supplemented with selected chapters from other sources such as the archaeological and regional perspectives in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*.

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