

BOOK REVIEW

Cyrene to Chaeronea: Selected Essays on Ancient Greek History. By GEORGE CAWKWELL. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 485. Hardcover, £80.00/\$150.00. ISBN 978-0-19-959328-6.

George Cawkwell is by any reckoning a major historian of classical Greece. From the early 1960s to the 1980s he produced a series of penetrating articles, most of which are included here, in which he put forward a distinctive and compelling view of fourth-century history in the years down to the triumph of Philip. The chapters covering this period (IX–XIX) constitute the core of the book. Four more recent chapters on Archaic Greece (I–IV), and a further four on fifth-century topics (V–VIII) precede them. It should be said at the outset that the quality and interest of the individual chapters are uniformly high, and that the book as a whole represents a master class in a particular, distinctly traditional, kind of Greek history. Insofar as the publication of a scholar's *kleine Schriften* is a tribute to the importance of his or her work, the appearance of this book is not only well deserved but also, since the latest article was published in 1997, more than a little belated.

Space precludes detailed discussion of the individual chapters, but some general observations can be made. First, the book is almost exclusively concerned with political, diplomatic and military history (the first chapter on archaic colonization is an exception). Thucydides, Xenophon and Demosthenes all feature very prominently, and indeed Cawkwell, in these papers and elsewhere, has made an important contribution to our understanding of each of these authors. Second, the articles included here are almost all on 'core' topics. Taken together, chapters IX–XIX constitute a pretty thorough survey of the main issues of fourth-century Greek history. Third, as Simon Hornblower notes in his introduction, many of the chapters are framed as challenges to commonly held views, such as that overpopulation was the main cause of Greek colonization (I), or that early Greek tyrants rose to power through the support of the people (II), or that hoplite battles involved pushing and shoving analogous to scrummaging in rugby (XVIII). Whether or not one is always persuaded by his arguments, Cawkwell's advocacy is highly effective. Finally, Cawkwell shows a strong interest in military

matters, both tactics (XVIII on hoplite battles) and strategy (most explicitly in VII and XVI), and sees military superiority as a decisive factor in shaping the history of the fourth century. Thus Spartan power collapsed, in his view, not because of demographic problems or the belligerent policies of Agesilaus, but because the Spartans had the misfortune to come up against a “military genius” in Epaminondas (XII–XIV). Similarly, Demosthenes was misguided to advocate war with Philip, since the latter’s wealth and power made such a war unwinnable by the Athenians (XVI). In all this there is a hardheaded realism that is almost Thucydidean in character.

The principle of selection employed in compiling this volume is somewhat obliquely discussed in the preface, where Cawkwell justifies the omission of articles “primarily concerned with Peace of Philocrates” on the ground that the evidence of Demosthenes and Aeschines is too slippery to allow firm conclusions to be reached. More generally, he has chosen to include only “a small number of Demosthenica, mainly concerned to explore his strategic judgement” (viii). Connoisseurs of the age of Demosthenes, a period that Cawkwell has made his own, may feel a little short-changed. Several major articles are included, but not the long piece on “Demosthenes’ Policy after the Peace of Philocrates,” an important discussion of relations between Philip and the Greeks in the second half of the 340s. Clearly it was decided to include only longer pieces of more general interest; I wish nevertheless that space could have been found for the short article on “The Power of Persia” that appeared in 1968 in a now-defunct Oxford student journal. As for the chapters dealing with the fifth century and earlier, Cawkwell writes that these have been included “partly out of Tarn-like defiance” (the allusion escapes me) “partly to draw the fire of critics and partly to encourage readers to read” (x). This should be taken with a substantial pinch of salt: these are all important contributions to scholarship.

Some minor corrections have been made, but the chapters are otherwise unaltered from their original publication, except that in the citing of inscriptions references have been added to the collections of Rhodes and Osborne, Fornara, and Harding. The volume is attractively produced, but the re-setting of the articles has introduced some errors. Most will cause no trouble, but on p. 240 n. 61 the obviously wrong “[Dem.] 16” should read “[Dem.] 1 6” (i.e. pseudo-Demosthenes speech 50, section 6), and at p. 323 n. 86 the deletion of the word “the” from “He then goes on to attach the special significance … of meaning …” renders the sentence unintelligible.

In short, the articles collected in this volume are all fine examples of scholarship, and the book as a whole represents a formidable body of work. Any Greek historian will learn a lot from reading it. My only reservation arises not from the book's content, but from the fact that the original articles are almost all easily accessible electronically. Of the nineteen chapters in *Cyrene to Chaeronea*, no fewer than fifteen were originally published in either *JHS* or *CQ*, whilst two others appeared in *Mnemosyne* and *Phoenix*, all journals that are available through JSTOR. In the absence of much by way of "added value," I hope it is not churlish to raise the question whether such collections of previously published material are as valuable now as they undoubtedly once were. That apart, this is a splendid book.

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