

BOOK REVIEW

Italy's Lost Greece: Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology. By GIOVANNA CESERANI. *Greeks Overseas*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 348. Hardcover, \$74.00/£45.00. ISBN 978-0-19-974427-5.

The study of Greek colonization has seen something of a resurgence in recent years, and as this revival was stimulated in no small part by a re-examination of traditional scholarly assumptions, Ceserani's intellectual history of European responses to Magna Graecia is both timely and much needed.

The introduction engages with the relative neglect of Magna Graecia in understandings of the development of classical scholarship and outlines the aim of enabling a more "intricate" and "nuanced" understanding of the history of classical archaeology and modern Hellenism. The first chapter begins by discussing early work from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, when for a short period Southern Italy became the place to experience "Greece." We are then introduced to the tension between local and foreign perceptions of Magna Graecia, before moving on to the second chapter and the marginalization of Magna Graecia by Northern Europeans. Underwhelmed by its relative lack of visible material remains and influenced by contemporary colonial ideas, they came to focus on the region's exoticism and primitivism instead of its classicism. Local scholars, contrastingly, created work to serve the needs of a Southern Italian intellectual milieu, yet wider interest in Magna Graecia saw a revival with the coming of the American Revolution, when it gained importance as an example of colonization and finally took a major place in the histories of Gillies and Mitford.

The third chapter focuses on the important but overlooked role played by Magna Graecia and Rome-based institutions in the formation of classical archaeology during the early nineteenth century. Although indebted to Neapolitan intellectual circles, foreigners working from Rome—in the context of growing German domination of the new discipline of archaeology and also an incipient division of scholarship along national lines—would progressively seek to distance themselves from local scholarship even as they exploited its knowledge and

adopted its practices. The fourth chapter demonstrates how national differences came to be ever more pronounced later in the century with the emergence of national archaeological institutions. The author stresses the interrelationship between scholarship and political or intellectual developments – for instance the latest scholarly methods, colonial ideology and an often underplayed English nationalism, in shaping George Grote’s great *History of Greece*, a work which would further marginalize Magna Graecia. Focus then shifts to Paolo Orsi and the nationalistic Ettore Pais, neither of whom could prevent the region’s marginalization into the Fascist era.

With the fifth and final chapter, the discussion moves into the interwar period with an analysis of the pro-Fascist Emanuele Ciaceri, who sought to make the history of the Greek colonies speak to his hyper nationalist concerns, and the anti-Fascist Zanotti Bianco, who by contrast was indebted more to Orsi than Pais. In this same chapter comes the conclusion: an outline of trends in the study of Magna Graecia since that period and a consideration of its future in an age in which Hellenocentrism no longer prevails and where different perspectives, such as cultural interaction, have replaced Athenian classicism as the prism through which to see the region. The book ends by stressing the role of Magna Graecia in making, asserting and interrogating the identity of the modern west.

This is a work which leaves the reader with a much deeper appreciation of Magna Graecia’s place in the development of classical scholarship, yet certain opportunities were missed. Focusing on the region’s marginalization, this book is ideally placed to comment on recent debates surrounding the study of Greek colonization—not least the influence of contemporary colonial experiences in creating a vision of Greek ascendancy over native peoples and the superiority of mainland Greeks over those of the colonies. Here it is worth noting the only bibliographic omission of note—various useful contributions in Hurst and Owen, *Ancient Colonisations: Analogy, Similarity and Difference* (2005).

The book might also have made more of how ideas concerning political freedom (or liberalism) informed approaches to ancient Greece and underpinned the Athenocentrism which exerted such a defining impact on accounts of Magna Graecia and indeed Sicily, not least in the histories of Grote and E. A. Freeman. The exclusion of Sicily is at first glance glaring, yet considering the wealth of material that Ceserani has revealed for Southern Italy alone, entirely understandable. Nonetheless it would benefit the reader to know, in greater detail, how Ceserani sees the dynamics at play in Sicily.

With the exception of one or two typographical errors, this book is well presented. Its chronological approach works well in conveying the development of ideas, although a separate, concluding chapter, summarizing the key themes and findings, would have been helpful. As it is, the conclusion seems rather abrupt.

All in all, and most importantly, this book is well conceived and well executed. One of the best aspects is how Ceserani traces the debt of ideas from scholar to scholar and the depth of the context (personal, cultural and political) in which so great a range of scholars are placed. To conclude, this is a much needed work which accomplishes what it sets out to achieve. Regardless of the fact that it does not very directly engage with recent work on Greek colonization, it will undoubtedly prove of value to scholars specializing in that field and classical studies more broadly, in addition to appealing to those wider audiences interested in the history of classical scholarship and modern European intellectual history.

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