

BOOK REVIEW

Creating a Hellenistic World. Edited by ANDREW ERSKINE and LLOYD LLEWELLYN-JONES. Swansea and London: The Classical Press of Wales, 2011. Pp. xx + 355. Hardcover, £55.00/\$110.00. ISBN 978-1-905125-43-2.

The studies in this book represent the kind of innovation driving the study of the Hellenistic world. For instance, most of the articles eschew traditional delineations to highlight the Hellenistic appropriation of Athenian history, culture, and art. On the other hand, in these studies the Hellenistic world belongs to Alexander and his successors. Perhaps one cannot expect to find Rome or Carthage in a book about the creation of the Hellenistic world, but even Agathocles' Syracuse and the Aitolian and Achaean Leagues rate scant mention. In the end, these studies present innovative and provocative views of the world of the Antigonids, the Seleucids, and the Ptolemies.

Robin Lane Fox opens the collection with "The First Hellenistic Man." He argues that the archetypical Hellenistic man, like Alexander or Hieronymos of Kardia, embodies "a new 'Machiavellian' ethic" (18). Lane Fox raises an interesting question: Polybius has long been charged with Machiavellian tendencies, and Arthur Eckstein has provided a thorough study of their relationship to the morality of the Hellenistic age.¹ It would be interesting to see Lane Fox consider Polybius' morality in light of the (Machiavellian) Hellenistic man.

Several interesting studies in the book can only be summarized in the space given here: Stephen Colvin illustrates how, though the *koine* represents a standard that corresponds to no single spoken or written variety, speakers come to view the standard as their own mother tongue and consider the vernacular a corrupted version of it. Richard Hunter considers *The Letter of Aristeas* an imaginative reconstruction of Alexandria and the exercise of Alexandrian power in its heyday; though not historiography, the *Letter* creates a Hellenistic world and its "knowing anxiety about genre" establishes it within the mainstream of Hellenistic literature. Joseph Roisman identifies Hieronymos' "elitist approach to history" as

¹ A. Eckstein, *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995).

the origin of the favorable view of Eumenes in the sources and the opinion that the Silver Shields were traitorous mutineers. Such an argument could address whether the Silver Shields' disregard of the soldier's duty was a distinctive element of the Hellenistic world, but Roisman does not go far in that direction.

Alan B. Lloyd tracks Egypt's development from satrapy to Hellenistic kingdom through oppressive Persian rule and the mediation between local tradition and governmental authority of Alexander and Ptolemy. Josef Wieshöfer reacts to Momigliano's arguments in *Alien Wisdom* and argues that the silence of the sources reflect the success the *fratarakā* enjoyed by limiting their goals to present no obstacle to the Seleucids who in turn adopted a benevolent attitude towards unthreatening subjects. Hans-Ulrich Wiemer employs new evidence from Posidippus to reconsider the Colossus and the pillar at Delphi as Rhodian expressions of a desire for hegemony that began soon after 323. Shane Wallace examines how the memory of Plataia and its association with unity, *eleutheria*, and anti-barbarianism was appropriated by Philip and Alexander in their conquest, avoided by Hyperides in the Hellenic War, and revived again in the Chremonidean War. Andrew Erskine's contribution explores the Macedonian court through the experience of Persaios of Kition, "a credible if not especially impressive" (180) philosopher to illustrate the tension between philosophy and the court. James I. Porter attempts to revise the "current ideology" which describes Hellenistic poetry as "miniaturist, pointillist, and precious" (272). Peter Schultz picks up the unstated theme of the collection by arguing that primary features of the Hellenistic baroque are rooted in the tradition of fifth-century Athenian sculpture.

Particularly interesting are three considerations of royal women. Elizabeth D. Carney defines the appearance of the title *basilissa*, a device used to legitimize the authority of royal women, as the critical event in the evolution of the position of royal women. The marriages between courtesans and kings in the Macedonian courts provides the subject of Daniel Ogden's contribution. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and Stephanie Winder explore Berenike II's construction of her royal image through associations with the Egyptian goddess Hathor: the lock of hair is only one of many appropriations of Hathor's public imagery. Unfortunately, there is some confusion here regarding the coins Berenike II struck. The authors maintain that these coins bear the superscription "Queen Berenike and King Ptolemy," but the coins in the figures read only ΒΕΡΕΝΙΚΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ (249, 253).

Like many collections, the final product could have benefitted from more collaboration and consideration by each author of the others' arguments. For instance, Wieshöfer's arguments of Achaemenid protocol and custom at Peukestas' feast in honor of Eumenes (108–9) clash with Roisman's assertions about Eumenes' selfishness, lack of confidence in the Silver Shields, and the rationale behind his battle order (esp. 72). More jarring are the various definitions of βασιλίσσα. For Carney, the term is "unclear, ambiguous," and because it refers variously to royal wives or daughters and female regents or monarchs is best translated as "royal woman" (202). The authority of her statement is dissonant with Ogden's assertion that Harpalos required Pythionike be addressed as "βασιλίσσα (queen)" (225), but it positively undermines Llewellyn-Jones and Winder's assertion that the superscription of Berenike II's coins, ΒΕΡΕΝΙΚΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ, must have read to Ptolemy as "love letters" (249). If we are convinced by Carney's arguments, the coins could have had a very different message from that.

Despite any shortcomings, this collection should stimulate and encourage new explorations of the successor kingdoms of the early Hellenistic period. It provides fresh considerations of the world of the successors directed at the scholar, not the student, and therefore fills a need more often felt than addressed.

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