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Daniel Ogden (ed.), *The Hellenistic World: New Perspectives*,
The Classical Press of Wales, Swansea 2023, 318 pp.;
b/w ills., maps; ISBN 978-1-914535-32-1

The ongoing flourishing of studies on the Hellenistic period, especially those devoted to the history of the Seleucid state and its neighbours, can be traced back to the late 1980s/early 1990s. Its initial impetus came from two books by A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White, in which the authors offered a new perspective on the role of Hellenism in the eastern Hellenistic world[1] and the history of the Seleucid empire.[2] The critical and polemical response to these two monographs led to a growing scholarly interest both in the regional history of the Hellenistic world and in understudied aspects of its history (with the political and military aspects hitherto prioritised over social and economic ones), resulting in a number of monographs and edited volumes. The latter usually collate proceedings of numerous conferences concerning selected aspects of the Hellenistic world. Among such proceedings one may include *The Hellenistic World: New Perspectives*, edited by Daniel Ogden from the proceedings of a conference organised at the University of Wales in 2000. First published in 2002 by G. Duckworth & Co. Ltd, London and The Classical Press of Wales, the volume was subsequently reissued by The Classical Press of Wales (2023) with a new graphic layout. Although the content of the reprint has not been updated and the original run has already been appraised, reviewing the reissue may bring it to the attention of younger generations of researchers.

The book consists of fourteen chapters, each assigned to one of five thematic sections, determined by the editor according to the subject matter of the texts presented in them. In the first of these parts, entitled "Structure and System," the editor included two chapters. J. Davies, who authored the first one ("The Interpretation of Hellenistic Sovereignties," pp. 1–21), explores the close and complex relationships between the rulers of the Hellenistic world, ones that wove a network of mutual family ties. Such relationships had an enormous impact on the development of this world and events taking place within. The author distinguishes two types of these relationships: between dynasties and between rulers and their subjects. In the case of the latter, various forms of interdependence (whether between the ruler and their entourage or between the ruler and the communities under their rule) served to strengthen the rulers' control over the ruled territory. In the second chapter, K. Zimmermann ("Eratosthenes' Chlamys-Shaped World: A Misunderstood Metaphor,"

[1] A. Kuhrt, S. Sherwin-White, *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and non-Greek Civilizations from Syri to Central Asia after Alexander*, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1987.

[2] S. Sherwin-White, A. Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire*, London 1993.

pp. 23–40) puts forward a new interpretation of Eratosthenes likening the inhabited world to a chlamys: according to Zimmermann, the said chlamys should be understood not as a two-dimensional shape but rather as a three-dimensional object, as worn on the body. Approached in such a manner, the metaphor becomes easier to understand and apply.

Part two, "King and Court," comprises three chapters. S. le Bohec-Bouhet, author of the first one ("The Kings of Macedonia and the Cult of Zeus in the Hellenistic Period," pp. 41–57), analyses the accounts on the role of the cult of Zeus in the Macedonian monarchy, both under the Argeads and Antigonids. Drawing on the source data, the author concludes that the rulers of both dynasties used the cult to assert their own political and religious position: tracing their descent from Zeus in the official propaganda, they broadcast their divine descent through contemporary literature and art, which depicted them in close association with this god. The Macedonian rulers also emphasised their closeness with Zeus by presiding over festivals dedicated to him, making personal offerings to him, or expanding and decorating his shrine at Dion, the main centre of his cult in Macedonia. E. Carney, author of the following chapter ("Hunting and the Macedonian Elite: Sparing the Rivalry of the Chase," pp. 59–80), points out the ideological importance of hunting in Macedonia: to demonstrate the physical prowess of the rulers in direct confrontation with wild game. Since every such confrontation tested and confirmed their leadership, the kings forbade the participation of third parties—indeed, so much so that even when the king's companions assisted him when his life was in danger, the king would refuse their help, as several of Alexander of Macedon's companions found out. W. Heckel, author of the final chapter of this section ("The Politics of Distrust: Alexander and his Successors," pp. 81–95), drawing on his analysis of Alexander of Macedon's personal politics, points out the ruler's distinct lack of trust, even towards his closest confidantes. This distrust was expressed, among other things, through Alexander's avoidance of entrusting his companions with positions of too great importance in both the army and the administration.

Part three, "Family and Kinship," consists of three chapters on, broadly speaking, relationships, social relations and demographics. The first of them, by A. Erskine ("O Brother Where Art Thou? Tales of Kinship and Diplomacy," pp. 97–115), concerns the practical aspects of kinship between different Greek cities, based on real or mythological common origin. Referring to common origin or shared ancestry was readily employed in diplomatic relations between Greek cities to obtain certain advantages and to achieve vital objectives, including asserting the right of asylum,[3] obtaining material assistance (cf. pp. 101–102) *etc*. Two subsequent chapters by A. B. Loyd ("The Egyptian Elite in the early Ptolemaic Period: Some Hieroglyphic Evidence," pp. 117–136) and D. Thompson ("Families in Early Ptolemaic Egypt," pp. 137–156), address various aspects of the social history of Egypt under the early Ptolemies. Hieroglyphic inscriptions from this period, while not always properly employed as a source, remain relevant for its study. Thanks to them, it is known that the established families of the Egyptian social elite did not lose their importance under the new government, with their representatives remaining in power at the local level and at the royal court. Demographic data from the

[3] See K. Knäper, Hieros kai Asylos. *Territoriale Asylie im Hellenismus in ihrem historischen Kontext*, Stuttgart 2018.

same period, on the other hand, make it possible to draw a number of conclusions about the shape and size of Greek and Egyptian families.

The authors of the chapters included in the next section, "Landscape and People," examine geographical and economic matters of certain regions of the Hellenistic world. Chr. Mileta, author of the first chapter ("The King and His Land: Some Remarks on the Royal Area (basilikē chōra) of Hellenistic Asia Minor," pp. 157–175), discusses the Hellenistic rulers' handling of the areas over which they exercised authority (*i.e.*, the royal domains that were their private property and directly under royal administration), as well as those that were owned by neither cities nor tribes. In return for one's right to use them, the rulers demanded payment of *phoroi*, usually in kind. According to the author, the rulers' attitude to land ownership in Asia Minor evolved over time, taking a more formal form.[4] G. Shipley ("Hidden Landscapes: Greek field Survey Data and Hellenistic History," pp. 177–198) uses selected examples to demonstrate the relevance of archaeological data to regional studies of Greek economic development in the Hellenistic period, while D. Braund ("Steppe and Sea: The Hellenistic North in the Black Sea Region before the First Century BC," pp. 199–219) outlines the location of Greek cities on the Black Sea and the impact of their hostile environment on their fortunes, also noting the marginal importance of the northern Black Sea region for the Hellenistic world until the advent of Mithridates VI.

The chapters that comprise the final section, "Art and Image," address selected aspects of Hellenistic art and its reception in various art forms in the 19th and 20th centuries. The chapter written by R. Wagner ("Hellenistic Mosaics," pp. 221–251), is concerned with the evolution of mosaic making techniques during the Hellenistic period. According to the author, the Hellenistic era witnessed the emergence of a new technique (*opus tessellatum*) and the concurrent application of new materials, which allowed mosaic makers to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of their works. However, it remains disputed when this new technique became widely used. The authors of the next two chapters, Sh. Hales ("How the Venus de Milo Lost Her Arms," pp. 253–273) and L. Llewellyn-Jones ("Celluloid Cleopatras or Did the Greeks Ever get to Egypt?," pp. 275–304) respectively discuss the influence of Hellenistic art on the work of the nineteenth-century British painters and the manner in which twentieth-century film-makers represented and perceived Cleopatra and her era in their works.

Despite the passage of time, this work has not lost its value, with many issues analysed and discussed within being more or less explicitly addressed by other researchers. However, to read it today leaves one unsatisfied. One reason for this is that the publisher did not even attempt to supplement the book with either an appendix updating the *status quaestionis* (since our knowledge has, after all, progressed considerably over time) or with concise authorial notes added to every chapter that would qualify and supplement their earlier conclusions. Also missing is a summary of the most relevant recent publications on

[4] ". . . despite their central position within the Hellenistic state, the rulers had full political and economic control over only a part of the land, estates, communities and economic institutions within their kingdoms. The relationship of the rulers with the royal area was at first completely personal. But, from the beginning of the era of the Successors and from the simultaneous inception of the process of the formation individual Hellenistic states in Asia Minor, this relationship began to change and to display a more official, constitutional character" (p. 167).

the discussed issues, its absence most keenly felt for S. le Bohec-Bouhet's chapter, who repeatedly refers to unpublished inscriptions from Dion: the reader today can search the post-2002 volumes of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* but cannot easily ascertain whether the inscriptions discussed in the chapter have been already published within the compendium. The reviewed edition, published twenty-one years after the original one, sorely needed an appendix that would present the current state of knowledge on the problems discussed by the volume's authors: regrettably, this opportunity has been passed up.

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