Check for updates

new translations' and to 'make the practical wisdom of the ancient world accessible for modern life', according to the publisher's website.[18] Romm very nicely helps his readers approach Seneca's text by providing a lively introduction that presents the key facts about Seneca's biography woven into a narrative of the connection between ancient and modern concerns with time.

The text is presented in the original Latin with a facing new translation, which should indeed be a captivating and very thought-provoking read for the non-specialist reader. Romm succeeds at conveying the rhythm and the tone of Seneca's prose in a translation that is both true to the Latin and a very enjoyable read that presents the Senecan text in a new, attractive light (with just some minor inaccuracies: a Latin sentence is left untranslated on 28–9). As Romm explains in the introduction, he has 'pluralized' some of the pronouns, 'to avoid the overwhelming male bias of the original Latin' (xx). Most of the time, this results in changes that are unobtrusive enough. However, occasionally I found Romm's use of pronouns a bit distractive, as when he translates *audet quisquam de alterius superbia queri, qui sibi ipse numquam vacat?* (2) with 'does anyone dare to complain about the arrogance of another, while never making time for him- or herself?' (11). The mention of 'herself' goes against the grain of the Roman relationship between (male) patrons and clients that is evoked throughout the treatise and that Romm explains so well in the introduction (x), as well as Seneca's use of examples in this treatise, which are, of course, from the realm of male occupations. This made me wonder what price we might need to pay to make the ancient texts accessible to modern readers – which, needless to say, is vital for our discipline. Should we assimilate an ancient representation of society to our own, or should we make general readers aware of and encourage them to understand the differences between ancient Rome and modern societies? However one responds to these questions, James Romm has done a wonderful job at making Seneca an intriguing guide to the challenges not only of ancient, but also of modern life – reading this book is certainly time very well spent.

ANKE WALTER

University of Newcastle, UK
anke.walter@newcastle.ac.uk

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Greek history

I commence this review with a major contribution to the study of women in the ancient Greek world.[1] The public invisibility of women in the *poleis* of the archaic and classical

[18] <https://press.princeton.edu/series/ancient-wisdom-for-modern-readers>, accessed 6 June 2023.

[1] This is (hopefully) the final review affected by the impossibility of getting books for review as a result of the pandemic and the consequences of Brexit during 2021–2. I apologize once more to authors whose books should have been reviewed earlier.

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period is a well-known phenomenon; equally well-known is the fact that this starts to change from the Hellenistic period onwards, when developments in the culture of evergetism and in honorific practices created a niche for women to be publicly visible and honoured by their communities. Przemysław Sierkierka, Krystyna Stebnicka, and Aleksander Wolicki have published a two-volume collection of all public honorific inscriptions for Greek women from the classical to the Roman imperial period.[2] The work excludes honorific inscriptions for Hellenistic queens and female members of the Roman imperial family, thus focusing on honours for Greek citizen women and foreign women. The first volume includes a book-size introduction to the history of public honours for Greek women, examining diachronic changes and offering an overview of the language of inscriptions and the repertory of honours provided. At the same time, the introduction offers an extensive discussion of the role of women in the public life of Greek cities in the long term. The first volume also includes the corpus of inscriptions from Aegean Greece, the Balkans, and Sicily and Italy in the West; the second volume largely focuses on Asia Minor, while also including the few relevant inscriptions from Cyprus, Syria, Egypt, and Cyrenaica. Each inscription is described in detail, while the Greek text is accompanied by an English translation and followed by a focused commentary. In line with the other major corpus under review here, this editorial choice to provide translation, bibliography, and commentary will make these volumes an impressive research tool for both specialists and non-specialists. I admit that I was really surprised by the quantity of the surviving material: the volume includes 1128 inscriptions from 238 communities. While many of these inscriptions are short, formulaic, and repetitive, the information provided on a substantial number is truly fascinating for Greek social history and the history of women.

The history of classical Greece remains largely focused on Athens and Sparta, although over the last few decades a substantial growth of publications on Boeotia and Macedonia has started to create a better balance. Argos was one of the most significant cities in Greek history, not only because of its involvement in Greek geopolitical affairs, but also because its history illustrates many of the most important aspects of Greek history. Olivier Curty has edited a collection of nineteen articles of the late Marcel Piérart, the most influential specialist on Argive history in the last few decades.[3] From the various aspects examined, I would like to focus on three. The first is the development of the city of Argos and its territories and frontiers, and in particular the gradual incorporation of most of the Argive plain, a process that raises important questions for the character of Greek *poleis*. The second is the nature of Argive democracy, and the consequences of this non-Athenian democracy for how we write the history of ancient democracy. This issue will become particularly important with the final publication of the Argive financial archive, whose implications are raised in the final chapter of the volume. The third is the long-term history of the city and the

[2] *Women and the Polis. Public Honorific Inscriptions for Women in the Greek Cities from the Late Classical to the Roman Period, Volumes I and II*. By Przemysław Sierkierka, Krystyna Stebnicka, and Aleksander Wolicki. Berlin and Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2021. Pp. xx + xiv + 1239. Hardback £154.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-064061-8.

[3] *Klyton Argos. Histoire, société et institutions d'Argos. Choix d'articles de Marcel Piérart*. Edited by Olivier Curty. Scripta antiqua series, volume 128. Bordeaux, Ausonius Éditions, 2020. Pp. 356. Illustrations. Paperback €25.00, ISBN: 978-2-35-613251-2.

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section devoted to the city in Roman times, in line with recent developments in the history of other Greek communities.

Kristina Neumann's new book turns our attention from the history of a city in the Aegean to the history of Antioch in Syria.[4] The book focuses on the coins minted at Antioch or by the city of Antioch as a means of studying both the numismatic history of the city and the wider North Syrian region, as well as a window through which to explore the changing history of this megalopolis from its emergence as a Hellenistic royal foundation to late antiquity. In this respect, it joins a number of recent successful marriages between numismatics and ancient history. The book examines the iconography and legends of the various issues connected to Antioch, but at the same time explores the distribution of hundreds of thousands of these issues across space and time. At the core of the book is the co-existence between imperial authorities, which used Antioch as a mint that served their military and fiscal needs on the one hand, and the local citizen body of Antioch, which used coinage as a means to further local monetization and as an expression of civic pride and identity on the other. The book manages to successfully navigate the reader across the centuries of this entanglement, while also introducing evidence that is largely unfamiliar to most non-specialists.

The *Corpus of Ptolemaic Inscriptions* constitutes a major contribution to Hellenistic history, the history of the Ptolemaic kingdom and the study of intercultural relations in antiquity.[5] The book under review here is the first of three projected volumes, covering 206 inscriptions from Alexandria and the Delta up to Memphis. The volume includes some of the most important inscriptions of Hellenistic history, and in particular the famous Rosetta stone that made possible the decipherment of Hieroglyphic, but it also includes a wide range of fascinating texts, from metrical inscriptions through lists of Anatolian immigrants in Egypt to an explanatory text for a sundial. The editors should be congratulated on two counts. The first concerns the format: each inscription is described in detail alongside the text and its English translation, a detailed relevant bibliography, commentary, and photos, whenever available. The English translations, the photos, and the bibliographies will make the book an immensely pleasurable experience for non-specialist readers in particular, who will be able to use the inscriptions as a window to Ptolemaic history more generally. The second reason concerns the decision to publish Greek texts alongside texts in Demotic and Hieroglyphic; for those who do not know ancient Egyptian, but wish to explore intercultural relations in Hellenistic Egypt, this decision will prove very useful.

Another significant contribution to Hellenistic history is the volume edited by Christelle Fischer-Bovet and Sitta von Reden, which offers a comparative examination

[4] *Antioch in Syria. A History from Coins (300 BCE–450 CE)*. By Kristina M. Neumann. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xxviii + 410. 111 figures, 9 tables. Hardback £90.00, ISBN: 978-1-108-83714-9.

[5] *Corpus of Ptolemaic Inscriptions. Part I: Greek, Bilingual, and Trilingual Inscriptions from Egypt. Volume I: Alexandria and the Delta (Nos. 1–206)*. Edited by Alan K. Bowman, Charles V. Crowther, Simon Hornblower, Rachel Mairs, and Kyriakos Savvopoulos. Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents series. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xviii + 539. Illustrations, map. Hardback £120.00, ISBN: 978-0-19-886049-5.

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of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires.[6] This book differs from most other volumes of comparative history in one important respect: almost all chapters are written together by a specialist in Ptolemaic and a specialist in Seleucid history. The attempt is largely successful, as the joint examination of a single phenomenon by scholars with different trainings and foci has allowed a series of interesting patterns to emerge; examining together the fixed Ptolemaic capital with the series of Seleucid capitals raises the issue of their entanglement in wider exchange networks. This format should be adopted by other future comparative projects. The ten comparative chapters centre around three major axes: cities, settlement, and integration, examining capitals, settlement policies, and the integration of indigenous elites and immigrants; communication and exchange, exploring concepts of time, royal portraiture, and monetary policies; and, finally, the legitimation of the foreign Hellenistic dynasties, their collaboration with local elites, and regional revolts against their rule.

The latter brings us to a very interesting volume, edited by Stefan Pfeiffer and Gregor Weber, on social conflicts and divisions in the Hellenistic world.[7] This volume follows a highly welcome recent trend towards a systematic exploration of Hellenistic social history. The seven contributions of this volume examine the repertory of conflicts during the Hellenistic period. The contributors study the salience of ethnic, religious, and dynastic loyalties for the conflicts within Hellenistic states and communities. This examination takes place along two axes: first, the various forms of Hellenistic cities, from Greek cities in the Aegean, through the new multi-ethnic royal foundation of Alexandria, to Babylon, an old imperial capital with a new ethnic group of residents aligned to the new dynasty; the second axis examines ethnic and religious conflicts in the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms respectively, as well as conflicts in Hellenistic Judaea and the Far East. Two things stand out from the various chapters: on the one hand, the need to pay serious attention to the geopolitical context within which conflicts took place, an issue that comes out very well in the chapter discussing support for Macedonian kings in Greek cities; on the other hand, most contributors stress political conflict for power rather than ethnic and religious competition as the key cause of these conflicts. Perhaps it is time to re-examine whether the concepts of political, religious, and ethnic identity that we apply to antiquity actually make sense or should be reconstructed to fit more specifically the ancient world.

The fourth work on Hellenistic history under review is Robin Waterfield's biography of Antigonus Gonatas.[8] There has been no biography of Gonatas for more than a century; this is partly the result of the famous loss of narrative historiography for most of the events of the third century. Faced with this problem, Waterfield has wisely chosen to use Gonatas' life as a canvas on which to construct a history of the Aegean

[6] *Comparing the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires. Integration, Communication, and Resistance*. Edited by Christelle Fischer-Bovet and Sitta von Reden. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xviii + 390. Illustrations, maps. Hardback £90.00, ISBN: 978-1-108-47925-7.

[7] *Gesellschaftliche Spaltungen im Zeitalter des Hellenismus (4.–1. Jahrhundert v. Chr.)*. Edited by Stefan Pfeiffer and Gregor Weber. Oriens et Occidens series, volume 35. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2021. Pp. 222. Paperback €46.00, ISBN: 978-3-515-13079-0.

[8] *The Making of a King. Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon and the Greeks*. By Robin Waterfield. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xxvi + 277. 16 figures, 8 maps. Hardback £21.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-885301-5.

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Greek world in the third century BCE. The first part of the book presents the setting by sketching the main protagonists: the various Successors that emerged out of the partition of Alexander's empire, and in particular the Antigonids; Athens and Sparta, the eminent city-states of the classical period and their attempts at renewal; and the new federal states of Achaia and Aetolia. The second part focuses on key moments of Gonatas' life, in particular his defeat of the Galatian invasion, his victory in the Chremonidean war, and his solution to the geopolitical challenge of controlling the cities of southern Greece by means of installing garrisons. In the process, Waterfield paints a fascinating image of Hellenistic court life and of Antigonus' intellectual interests.

The final work on Hellenistic history is Mario Paganini's book on gymnasia and Greek identity in Ptolemaic Egypt.[9] The study of the gymnasion as a central institution of ancient Greek cities has become a very popular topic over the last fifteen years. The novelty of this book is that it shifts focus away from Greek *poleis* to the communities of Greek immigrants in Hellenistic Egypt, which were overwhelmingly rural and not organized as *poleis*. Furthermore, although gymnasia started life as private establishments, in the course of the Hellenistic period they were largely taken over by the *poleis* to become publicly controlled institutions; in this respect, Egyptian gymnasia resembled the private origins of Greek gymnasia, although their public character also increased in the course of time. Paganini shows in detail how Egyptian gymnasia functioned as foci of cultural and social life among the Greek immigrants, while also incorporating people from non-Greek diasporas in Egypt, such as the Thracians, and even providing opportunities for Egyptians who wished to assimilate to the Greek milieu. The implications of these findings for the study of Greek identity are obvious, but it is unfortunate that Paganini has not engaged with the literature on Greek identity and cross-cultural exchange that has emerged in the ten years since the completion of the thesis on which the book is based. It is to be hoped that future contributions on Hellenistic Egypt will engage in a more systematic manner with this literature.

This review includes a rich crop of books on Xenophon. Shane Brennan and David Thomas have made a major contribution to the Landmark series of translated texts of Greek historians with their volume on Xenophon's *Anabasis*.[10] Readers who have made use of other volumes in this series know what to expect: a reliable and user-friendly translation of the text, accompanied by extensive annotation, detailed maps, and chronological marks to enable readers to follow the text easily. Given the unfamiliarity of most readers with the places in Asia Minor and Thrace where most of the action takes place, the maps in this volume are particularly useful. In addition, the volume is richly illustrated with images that depict sites, monuments, and aspects of warfare and intercultural relations which are at the centre of this text. The translation is accompanied by twenty-three appendixes that offer excellent introductions by eminent specialists in the field to the main issues raised by the text (Xenophon, Persia, ancient

[9] *Gymnasia and Greek Identity in Ptolemaic Egypt*. By Mario D. Paganini. Oxford Classical Monographs series. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xviii + 317. 12 figures, 2 maps. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-284580-1.

[10] *The Landmark Xenophon's Anabasis*. Translated and edited by Shane Brennan and David Thomas. New York, Pantheon Books, 2021. Pp. lxx + 585. Illustrations, colour maps. Hardback $50.00, ISBN: 978-0-307-90685-4.

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warfare, ancient historiography, etc.), alongside a final appendix with biographies of the main protagonists. This volume will significantly change the experience and understanding of this very important text.

I continue with two works that, in their different ways, examine Xenophon as a critic. Matthew Christ's latest book promises a thorough re-examination of the relationship between Xenophon and Athenian democracy.[11] It has been usually assumed that Xenophon was a traditional aristocrat who was exiled by the Athenian democracy and remained adamant in his antidemocratic views across his various works. In line with other recent reinterpretations of the complexity of Xenophon's works, Christ argues that Xenophon aims to advise the Athenian elite to put aside claims of superiority on the basis of wealth and ancestry and to re-educate them how to develop the features necessary to become the appropriate leaders of the Athenian political system. This argument is developed through the examination of the historical episode of Arginusae and the regime of the Thirty, the Socratic dialogues of *Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, and the *Oeconomicus*, and in Xenophon's own voice in the Athenocentric *Hipparchicus*, and *Poroi*, and the *Anabasis*. The argument is generally sensible, and the discussion of many individual passages is very illuminating. At the same time, what Christ counts as democratic leadership and citizenship is at times so generalized that the argument loses some of its strength. Perhaps we can best say that the general Xenophontic argument about leadership and citizenship can sometimes be compatible with democracy, and at other times appreciated by people who had no interest in Athens or its democracy.

Christ's book should be read alongside Yun Lee Too's book on Xenophon's irony as social criticism.[12] Too argues that all Xenophontic works can be interpreted as critiques of contemporary communities, groups, and institutions and as evidence of pedagogic failure to understand the world properly and draw the right lessons. Where Christ sees Xenophon educating the Athenian elite on how to become the appropriate leaders of Athenian democracy, Too presents Athenian elites as failing to opt for military virtue instead of opulence. Where Christ sees Xenophon as an engaged critic of Athenian democracy, Too considers him as a quietist elitist. The key role of irony in Xenophon's work is, of course, the famous argument of Leo Strauss and his followers. Too disavows identification as Straussian, but generally emphasizes the need to read Xenophontic texts in context, in order to reveal meanings that are not obvious without careful reading; this creates the co-existence of different authorial voices that might be imperceptible to less able readers. The result of this method and argument is mixed: there is certainly value in rereading passages from a new point of view and discovering meanings that had been invisible, and readers will enjoy many such moments, but the attempt to read the whole of Xenophon from this single perspective will find many other readers unconvinced.

How were the Persian Wars remembered before Herodotus composed his monumental work that has fundamentally shaped the memory of these events ever

[11] *Xenophon and the Athenian Democracy. The Education of an Elite Citizenry*. By Matthew R. Christ. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. x + 215. Hardback £75.00, ISBN: 978-1-108-49576-9.

[12] *Xenophon's Other Voice. Irony as Social Criticism in the 4th Century BCE*. By Yun Lee Too. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. viii + 255. Hardback £85.00, ISBN: 978-1-350-25052-0.

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since? This is the subject of a truly monumental book by Giorgia Proietti.[13] The work is based on a deep engagement with cultural memory studies, and the relevant introductory chapter should be profitably read on its own; the emphasis on trauma as a significant aspect of memory processes is important. Proietti takes into account the full range of media employed by fifth-century Greeks to memorialize the events of the Persian Wars (poetry, inscriptions, paintings, buildings, cults). She reconstructs three phases in the construction of the Persian Wars memory: after Marathon, after Plataea, and in the context of the First Peloponnesian War. In all these contexts, the memorialization of the war was deeply linked to contemporary events and developments, and the issues and needs they brought to the fore, from the development of Athenian civic identity to the changing nature of Greek geopolitics. The First Peloponnesian War context seems to me a very important contribution of wider significance: if Thucydides' war has shaped how we conceptualize classical Greek history, the First War needs one day to be given its due. Readers of Herodotus will profit massively by re-examining his narrative in light of the conclusions of this book.

KOSTAS VLASSOPOULOS

University of Crete, Greece
vlasop@uoc.gr

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Roman history

The figure of the Roman emperor – ubiquitous yet ever-elusive – remains the flame to which Roman historians are ever drawn. And Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World* remains the yardstick against which all subsequent efforts are judged, and with which they are all inevitably in dialogue.[1] That is true too of *Caesar Rules*, the major new offering from Olivier Hekster, a one-time doctoral student of Millar's, and now one of the leading contenders for his crown.[2] Hekster's core interest is what the emperor *was*; in particular, how this institution could survive and adapt to changing circumstances despite the fact that formally it did not exist, certainly was not defined, and practically existed in a society antithetical on principle to both monarchy and change. Hekster finds the key for this long-worried lock in 'the presentation and perception of power' (10), and in particular the expectations – from all sides, and at all times – that both consolidated and constrained emperors' authority. To demonstrate

[13] *Prima di Erodoto. Aspetti della memoria delle Guerre persiane*. By Giorgia Proietti. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2021. Pp. xviii + 546. Hardback €96.00, ISBN: 978-3-515-12887-2.

[1] Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World 31 BC–AD 337* (London, Duckworth, 1977).

[2] *Caesar Rules. The Emperor in the Changing Roman World c. 50 BC–AD 565*. By Olivier Hekster. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. 400, 56 figures, 4 maps, 9 graphs. Hardback £30.00, ISBN: 978-10-09-22679-0.

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