

*Polis* interesting reading for both the expert and the more general reader. In the future, one hopes this standard will be applied to all articles published in the series.

*Elina M. Salminen*

JOHN BUCKLER – HANS BECK: *Central Greece and the Politics of Power in the Fourth Century BC*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2008. ISBN 978-0-521-83705-7. XIX, 309 pp. GBP 55, USD 99.

*Central Greece and the Politics of Power in the Fourth Century BC* is a collection of eighteen essays, almost all of which have been previously published in journals or other publications. They form a roughly chronological narrative from 395 until 336 BC, but there are some thematic pieces as well. After the prologue and an introductory "Survey of Theban and Athenian relations between 403–371 BC", Buckler and Beck, both historians, dive to the level of micro-history in an attempt to explain macrohistory. Battlefields, for example, are analyzed to explain the outcomes of battles that changed the course of history as described in even the most general of introductions to Greek history: mainly, the rise and fall of Thebes (along with the other mighty *poleis*) and ultimately the shift in power towards the north.

The essays utilize different methods. Chapters such as "The battle of Coronea and its historiographical legacy" and "Plutarch on Leuctra" discuss historiographical sources, often going down to the level of use of tenses or individual terms. There is a chapter on an inscription found on Cnidus, and chapters on the geography of battlefields at Chaeronea and Tegyra or the harbours of Boeotia. The common thread is that of military history and of criticizing the sources, ancient or modern. In this the authors often argue convincingly and showing an impressive knowledge of and attention to even the smallest detail. At times, however, the problems of a microscopic approach leave the reader sceptical: Why is the heavily restored edition of the inscription mentioning the *proxenia* granted to Epaminondas taken at face value by the authors who elsewhere spend much time and space criticizing over-zealous editors (and with good reason)? If the chapter "Xenophon's speeches and the Theban hegemony" concludes that Xenophon is trustworthy in places but biased and unreliable in others, how can one use him as the most reliable source for the Phocis-Locris incident of 395 BC? The problem is the bane of any ancient historian: how to extract a truthful and detailed narrative from sources as mangled and fragmentary as ours tend to be? The compromise between reasonable confidence and high precision is often an awkward one, and so it is in places here as well. As a detail that is minor but odd enough to be worthy of mention, the chapter "Philip II's designs on Greece" draws parallels between Hitler and Philip II at several points, leaving the reader wondering whether there truly are no more contemporary and more apt analogies to be used.

*Central Greece and the Politics of Power in the Fourth Century BC* is a monograph aimed at the specialist. While the introductory and concluding chapters are a good read for the general historian or classicist, the essays in between seem better suited to journals (from which they originally derive) due to the lack of a cohesive narrative as well as the different timeframe of an article from a monograph – the chapter "Epaminondas and the new inscription from Cnidus" discusses an inscription found 14 years prior to the publication of the book. To those interested in the fine details of single battles and conflicts, military vocabulary used

by historiographers or the individuals behind the powers of Thebes, Athens and Sparta, the monograph is doubtless a valuable read – although chances are they will already have read the essays in article form.

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JERZY LINDERSKI: *Roman Questions II. Selected Papers*. Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien, Band 44. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2007. XI, 726 pp. ISBN 978-3-515-08134-4. EUR 100.

As a young student, I had the habit of now and then spending a few hours at the section of the Helsinki University library with the newly arrived classical journals, browsing through all of them. Fairly soon I observed that there seemed to be a number of scholars whose work was always interesting and instructive irrespective of the subject, and I picked up the habit of making a copy of whatever these scholars published. One of them was Professor Linderski, whose papers were – and of course still are – characterized not only by an erudition hardly attainable by normal mortals but also by an irresistible style of English. It would thus be a truism to say that the publication of vol. II of Linderski's *Roman Questions* is an event of great significance.

Vol. I, covering the years 1958–1993, was published in 1995. This volume covers the following years up till 2006, but there are also some contributions from before 1995, most of them, as far as I can see, reviews. The numbering of the contributions stops at 50, but some of them have subsections (in these cases, too, we seem to be dealing mainly with reviews). In vol. I, there was much on *comitia*, divination and augural law, but in this volume it is harder to discern a clear focus; and there is perhaps a little less on Varro. Of course there is still much on Roman Republican history and on the interpretation of our sources for it, but I seem to be able to discern a certain shift towards things imperial and epigraphy. In fact, inscriptions play quite a considerable role in this volume (note the index of inscriptions p. 685ff.); one can only admire the way Professor Linderski deals with, e.g., the inscription from Urbino, *CIL* XI 6063 (p. 242ff.), once again showing that philology has the right to, and in fact must claim a significant role also in the interpretation of inscriptions of historical interest, a field dominated by historians (cf., by the way, p. 175 on the 'modern divorce of history from philology').

In my review of vol. I in *Arctos* 30 (1996) 264ff., I tried to describe the Linderskian style of writing a scholarly paper, observing especially that many papers seem to be characterized by a "ring composition", by which I meant that a problem is introduced in the beginning and furnished with a solution in the end (this normally meaning that further discussion of that particular problem is not needed), but that, in between, the discussion seems to lapse to other subjects. I explained this by observing that in investigating a problem Professor Linderski often encounters further problems (often unnoticed by previous scholars), e.g., in the text of authors adduced to elucidate the initial problem, and that he prefers to deal with these new problems before coming back to the question asked initially. Unless I am completely mistaken, there is perhaps a bit less of this here (but note, e.g., some of the papers in Section I, 'Historia et Ius'); but the style is in any case still the same. Note, e.g., p. 255, 'Herodian was writing a romance – but on the canvas of history'; or p. 515, 'The opening chapter ... combines the shallowness of American politology with the ponderous weight of German idiom' (followed by an