

*Once Again: Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*. Papers from the Copenhagen Polis Centre 7. Edited by THOMAS HEINE NIELSEN. Franz Steiner Verlag, München 2004. ISBN 3-151-08438-X. 202 pp. EUR 40.

No one can accuse the people of the Copenhagen Polis Centre of lacking a sense of humour. *Once Again: Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* follows publications such as *Yet More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* and *Even More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*. The same can be said for prolificacy: from 1993 onwards, the Centre has published eight collections of papers and seven collections of acts. While this is admirable and allows for a lively dialogue between the Centre and academics outside it, it also raises the question of how many new and fully-developed ideas can still be found in the latest instalment.

Sadly, *Once Again: Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* does leave the impression of a slightly hasty publication. Of the seven papers in the book, five are written by Mogens Herman Hansen; Thomas Heine Nielsen and Bjørn Paarmann have contributed one each. Thomas Heine Nielsen's paper, "The Concept of *Patris* in Archaic and Classical Sources" suffers from bloated footnotes and is a list of passages and inscriptions rather than an analytical paper. Of Mogens Herman Hansen's papers, one is a short but compelling argument for the Sane mentioned in Athenian tribute lists possibly being the Sane of Pallene instead of that of Athos; another lists examples of different types of sub-ethnics attested mainly in sources dating to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but contains sadly little analysis. "Was Every *Polis* State Centred on a *Polis* Town?" is, again, very short and introductory, but includes useful tables of centres attested as *poleis* in the political sense and those not thus attested but with a mint. "The Perioikic *Poleis* of Lakedaimon" is a point-by-point response to an article by Norbert Mertens wherein he criticizes the Centre's ideas of, for example, polis status and an urban centre going hand-in-hand, perioikic communities being independent, and polis status not requiring autonomy.

The papers mentioned above seem mostly useful as collections of lists and data. The two remaining papers, one by Bjørn Paarmann and another by Mogens Herman Hansen, are far more interesting. In "Geographically Grouped Ethnics in the Athenian Tribute Lists" Bjørn Paarmann argues convincingly against attempts to locate *poleis* based on tribute quota lists or assessment decrees – the material commonly but inaccurately referred to as "tribute lists". He navigates the problems innate in the history of the documents: their fragmentary nature, scribes copying previous years' lists creating an illusion of "a set order" in the lists, and the change from a (possibly) "first-come" listing to lose regional groupings. His analysis is detailed, step-by-step and supported by tables.

Hansen's paper "The Concept of the Consumption City Applied to the Greek *Polis*" similarly includes a convincing criticism of Sombart's ideas as applied to ancient Greek cities. Hansen lists three fundamentals of Sombart's theory: the opposition between urban and rural population, an urban minority, and the consumer status of the urban populace, and proceeds to argue how ancient Greek *poleis* and their inhabitants were predominantly urban, commuted flexibly from the *poleis* to the countryside, and produced food for their own consumption. In the process, he also provides ample and useful data about estimated *poleis* sizes and populations, including a list of walled cities. Problems with such estimates are rife, and the casual reader can only take some of Hansen's figures in good faith.

The two papers mentioned last should make *Once Again: Studies in the Ancient Greek*

*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.

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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