

she does not accept the position as a *haruspex*, mainly on good grounds (for *Aemilius Petensis*, I cannot fully accept her doubts). The volume is completed with a bibliography of 22 pages and indices of no fewer than 45 pages!

There is no doubt about the expertise of the author on the subject, and her general scholarly background is sufficient for prosopographical work. She is not an epigrapher, which becomes apparent in the occasional mistakes, e.g., in supplementing *C(naei)* (p. 102) or *arh[e]s[pex]* instead of *arh(e)s(pex)* (p. 34). But more crucial is the question of who needs a prosopography of 121 Roman *haruspices*, separated from the historical study based on this material? I understand problems of getting a thesis published, but it would certainly have been much more economical to have this prosopography included in the aforementioned historical study, which, in any case, is needed for an understanding of the position of individual *haruspices*.

*Jorma Kaimio*

JOEL ALLEN: *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2006. ISBN 978-0-521-86183-0. XIV, 291 pp. GBP 48.00, USD 80.

Joel Allen has written a book about hostages, an important subject, but, as the author notes in his introduction, one that is difficult to define. Also, the ominous connotations of the word "hostage" as used today contrast with hostages of the ancient world as an established "political" practice. Allen approaches the subject of hostages and hostage-taking in the Roman world employing a discursive approach and taking the accounts and stories written between 200 B.C.E to 200 CE concerning hostages and hostage-taking as his source material. He produces his own definition for hostages in the context of the study in the form of a "type" that consists of different dependent people, or more specifically: "young, elite figures who crossed into another world, were technically autonomous, yet betokened the subordinate role in a hegemonic, reciprocal relationship" (p. 22) thus widening the discussion from the formal *obsides* to a much larger group. He then examines this group of people through six categories of relationships: Creditor-Collateral; Host-Guest; Conqueror-Trophy; Father-Son; Teacher-Student and Masculine-Feminine followed by two separate discussions first on Polybius and then on Tacitus. The chapter on Polybius in particular is very interesting.

The relational categories themselves are useful for approaching the evidence and conceptualizing the phenomenon. The typology of different potential dimensions and political uses of being a hostage is well founded but at times casts a slightly modernizing view on the sources. Indeed, the discussion is somewhat marred by the vagueness of the term (or "type") "hostage" itself as used by Allen. All examples that can be categorized among the functional categories are put there without too much consideration of their status as presented in the sources. At times representatives of Allen's definition of hostages (his "type") are as easily traditional *obsides*, defeated enemies taken prisoner, or even students of Roman culture – hostages of Rome's powerful culture. Even if the sources are imprecise and vague, the ancient terms of hostages, which reflect ancient understandings, should have been given more consideration. Perhaps a reflection on what "Roman" types are to be found mostly in which category of relationship could have given rise to some additional conclusions. At the very least one would have

hoped for a comparison of the Roman system of hostages and hostage-taking with others that existed in the ancient world. A more thorough contextualizing would have added to the value of this interesting study.

Allen earns credit for focusing on hostages, an issue often neglected in the study of Roman history. Allen's approach by relational category is an illuminating one. He succeeds in throwing interesting light on the mindset of the Roman elite culture and its ways of negotiating and producing its power. The proofreading and copyediting of the book is of consistently high quality.

Joonas Sipilä

ARAM TOPCHYAN: *The Problem of the Greek Sources of Movsēs Xorenac'i's History of Armenia*. Hebrew University Armenian Studies 7. Peeters, Leuven 2006. ISBN 978-90-429-1662-3. X, 145 pp. EUR 42.

The penetration and continuation of Classical Greek literature among other ancient cultures, and especially among the eastern ones, is an interesting topic. Aram Topchyan's fascinating book examines the level of this cultural phenomenon in early medieval Armenian society as it can be discovered between the lines in one of the earliest Armenian historiographical works. The subject under investigation is a complicated compilation of local legends and proper sources written by one Movsēs Xorenac'i, who himself claimed to have been a member of the Armenian clergy in the mid-fifth century, but this, like so much of his writing, remains doubtful.

Until now Movsēs has been usually disregarded as a possible source for serious research due to the almost incomprehensible nature of his work, where fictional legends are intertwined with historical events. For the same reason all the claims by Movsēs of using genuine Greek sources has been categorically refuted as an intentional falsification and the names of the sources are usually seen as just copied from the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronicle*. It is this categorical denial of even the possibility that some of Movsēs' named sources could actually have been used that Topchyan puts under the microscope.

Proceeding from the introduction (pp. 1–15) to the subject at hand, Topchyan examines in the first chapter (pp. 17–64) some references to the Greek sources related to the earliest history of the Armenians. Four alleged sources – Berossus, Alexander Polyhistor, Abydenus, and Cephalion – are examined in equal fashion. First, a short description is provided of all the four authors accompanied with an introduction to the dominant view which sees all the references to the named sources as just interpolations from Eusebius' *Chronicle*. This is followed by a systematic textual comparison of Xorenac'i's references to the named sources and the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronicle*. In many cases Topchyan is able to demonstrate that Movsēs' text differs from the version given by Eusebius and is in fact closer to other sources like Syncellus, who actually made use of the said authors. The discoveries are noteworthy and the argumentation in favor of Movsēs having access to the authors themselves is compelling. As a possible solution and compromise, Topchyan suggests at the end of the chapter that the information may have reached Armenia in a collection of excerpts, which in my opinion could very well explain the fragmentary nature of the references and the textual correspondence with