

S. CUOMO: *Technology and Culture in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2007. ISBN: 978-0-521-81073-9 (hb), 978-0-521-00903-4 (pb). XI, 212 pp. GBP 45, USD 85 (hb); GBP 16.99, USD 29.99 (pb).

*Technology and culture in Greek and Roman antiquity* by S. Cuomo reads like the dream assignment for every scholar: it is a somewhat eclectic collection of short studies on topics covering a period from the fifth century BC until late antiquity and ranging from Athens to Roman North Africa and Constantinople, and seems like the sort of luxury very few academics have the time or funding to research and publish nowadays. Fortunately, any jealousy should be offset by the recognition that Cuomo has used that luxury to produce a solid and enjoyable piece of work.

This monograph goes into little technical detail but instead deals with the professionals of the trade and how they were viewed by others and by themselves. The book consists of five chapters with very little in common. The first chapter discusses the definitions of *tekhne* in classical Athens or perhaps rather different attitudes towards *tekhne*. This creates the framework for the rest of the book and introduces one of the few themes permeating the whole work: the position of technicians (as Cuomo calls those in possession of *tekhne*) in antiquity. The second chapter or ministudy is dedicated to the Hellenistic military revolution, which Cuomo argues was a gradual and parallel development rather than a linear progression. The next chapter focuses on funerary monuments belonging to or alluding to craftsmen. Boundary disputes and the use of surveyors on one hand and officials on the other to solve them create the main focus of Chapter 4. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses architects, professional and otherwise, and their status in late antiquity.

While tackling interesting questions, *Technology and culture in Greek and Roman antiquity* is perhaps even more interesting because of the methodology it applies. Cuomo experiments with different source material: Chapters 1 and 2 use ancient authors, Chapter 3 archaeological material with an art historical approach, Chapter 4 makes use of inscriptions while the last chapter is a synthesis of written and archaeological sources. Similarly, the chapter on the definitions of *tekhne* concentrates on the classical period; the second chapter on the Hellenistic; the chapter on carpenters' squares on funerary monuments uses material from the first and early second centuries AD; the inscriptions on boundary disputes are mostly from the second century AD; and the last chapter spans from the third to the sixth centuries AD.

As is almost inevitable, the multitude of approaches and methods used leads to some unevenness in the quality of the arguments. To use Chapter 2 on the Hellenistic military revolution as an example, Cuomo makes simple yet sharp observations, noting, for example, how Diodorus Siculus fails to distinguish between torsion and non-torsion catapults and how this shows technological advancement was viewed differently: the milestones pointed out by modern historians were not necessarily considered to be such in antiquity. Instead, appearance in weapons is emphasized in the ancient sources at the cost of efficiency. In the same chapter, however, Cuomo speculates on the archaeological evidence for catapult stones versus stones rolled down from the walls by the besieged, but fails to mention whether these stones were found inside, outside or by the walls. Similarly, local variation in the material is seen as ruling out general tendencies in development – a claim bordering on the absurd to the ears of any archaeologist.

Despite the occasional leap in logic, *Technology and culture in Greek and Roman antiquity* is full of interesting ideas and does well in combating deeply ingrained but out-dated ideas. It is, ultimately, a study on the "other" so popular in classical studies nowadays, and aims to give voice to doctors, craftsmen and the architects who were not Vitruvius, to name but a few.

The only problem with *Technology and culture in Greek and Roman antiquity* is that it leaves the reader wanting more. Cuomo lists potential research ideas in her Conclusion, some enough for a good few doorstops (technology and economy), and some more fitting for a slimmer monograph (compasses in iconography). As it is, Cuomo does an admirable job in hopefully tempting more students and scholars from different fields to tackle these themes and, even more importantly, to cooperate and cross the lines between disciplines.

Elina M. Salminen

MARGO KITTS: *Sanctified Violence in Homeric Society. Oath-Making Rituals and Narratives in the Iliad*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2005. ISBN 0-521-84720-6. XIII, 372 pp. GBP 45, USD 75.

L'autrice del presente libro, attraverso la lettura dell'*Iliade* omerica, propone di analizzare alcuni temi di grande portata: scene rituali della poesia epica come metodi simbolici di comunicazione; atti di giuramento nella poesia omerica; epifanie divine nei campi di battaglia nell'*Iliade* come pure nelle tradizioni del Vicino Oriente. L'argomento più interessante riguarda alcune scene dei libri 3 e 19 dell'*Iliade* (in particolare nel Cap. III), nelle quali vengono paragonati i sacrifici del giuramento e le stragi dei guerrieri troiani: "It is intriguing that the victims who die gasping and panting like sacrificial lambs are on the Trojan side, given the Trojan culpability as perjurers of the oath in Book 3" (p. 156). Rimangono tuttavia difficilmente rintracciabili, nell'analisi della Kitts, le conseguenze di questa tesi per quanto riguarda l'accezione di tutta l'opera omerica. Benché lo stile e la presentazione degli argomenti a volte risultino poco chiari, si tratta ovviamente di un saggio innovativo che probabilmente susciterà diverse reazioni da parte degli studiosi della materia.

Mika Kajava

*Nike. Ideologia, iconografia e feste della vittoria in età antica*, a cura di DOMENICO MUSTI. Problemi e ricerche di storia antica 23. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 2005. 358 pp. ISBN 88-8265-335-8. EUR 75.

In questo volume, curato da Domenico Musti, sono raccolti sette studi su alcuni aspetti della Nike e delle feste della vittoria nel mondo antico. Va notato tuttavia che quattro contributi sono riprodotti, con aggiunte, commenti e correzioni, da articoli anteriormente pubblicati in *RFIC* (rispettivamente, Musti 1–3 [1998–2000] e Marco Santucci sulle nozioni di pente-teride e trieteride [2002]). Purtroppo non vengono indicati i numeri di pagina degli articoli originali, come pure non sono chiaramente evidenziati i cambiamenti introdotti nel testo. Tre articoli escono qui per la prima volta: Musti 4 (su termini quali *isopythios*), Paola Stirpe