attention to this feature and cogently illustrates it. A textbook that insists upon the Hellenistic place in an ongoing evolution of Greek history brings salutary revisionism. But the idea has its limits. It must not be allowed to obscure the remarkable richness, distinctive cultural interactions, and the inventiveness and originality of the age.

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THE PERILS OF POLYGAMY

D. OGDEN: *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death. The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Pp. xxxiv + 317, figs. London: Duckworth, 1999. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-7156-2930-1.

Daniel Ogden, author of *Greek Bastardy in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods* (Oxford, 1995) and *The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1997), continues his studies on insiders and outsiders in the Greek World in his present book. As can be gathered from its title, he focuses on the wives of Hellenistic kings who, due to polygamous practices, could be powerful or powerless by turns, depending on their—and especially their children's—relations with the king. The situation could be even more complicated when the kings' courtesans had children, too. In general, it is difficult to make definite statements about the status of the women close to the kings (p. xxi); it is often difficult to decide whether marriages or marriage-like relations existed at the same time or successively. The situation could become acute once the ruling king's death necessitated a decision about his successor. For the kings 'failed to establish any consistent principles of royal legitimacy' (p. ix), if one does not take into account the principle of primogeniture among full siblings.

It is a well-established fact that there had been such chains of events in the Hellenistic dynasties ever since the Argeads. However, O. attempts to collect and analyse discursively the known facts of such disputes, and to define the rôle the royal courtesans played in the plotting and scheming at Hellenistic courts. To him 'that inherent familial instability is the single most powerful explanation of the disputes within and the eventual collapse of the hellenistic dynasties' (p. xx).

In a detailed introduction (pp. ix–xxxiv) O. describes his approach and the resulting methodological difficulties. The term used for the basic issue—competing children of the same father but of different mothers (especially pp. xxvi–xxx)—is 'amphimetric', which corresponds to ancient usage (cf., however, A. H. Sommerstein, *CQ* 37 [1987], 498–500). First of all, O. gives an overview of the cases and then he discusses the problems of modern scholarship regarding polygamy and legitimacy, such as the question of a line of succession. He tries to explain why Hellenistic kings did not give up polygamy despite its obvious destablizing effect. According to O., both high rates of infant mortality and a demonstration of the kings' status may have been causes. Other factors discussed are the age of the women and their living situation. In addition, O. presents in detail the predominantly anecdotal tradition.

The book consists of two main parts varying in length: in the first, 'Polygamy and Death in the Macedonian and Hellenistic Courts' (pp. 1–212), he discusses the Argeads, Alexander, Cassander and Lysimachus, the dynasties of the Ptolemies, Seleucids, Antigonids, and Attalids. Each chapter is prefaced with a brief characterization of the dynasty or the protagonists in the light of the issue discussed. The ensuing discussion is in chronological order, always combined with a schematic overview of wives and children of the king in question. More complicated cases, e.g.

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the families of Philip II, Ptolemy I, VI, and VIII, or Demetrios I, are dealt with in detail, especially concerning the question of how the compliance with amphimetric practice or the lack thereof affected a dynasty.

In the second part, 'Hellenistic Royal Courtesans' (pp. 213–72), O. deals on the one hand with methodology and evidence (i.e. again the question of sources; p. 221 has a compilation of all names), and on the other, under status and career he also treats the *vitae*, lifestyle, and names of the courtesans. In a section on courtesans at work he both inquires into their activities (sexual, religious, political) and presents moralizing judgements by contemporaries.

There follow three appendices (pp. 273–85): the first deals with women's quarters in Hellenistic royal palaces. It discusses the scanty evidence—archaeology being unable to provide much information. In a useful repertorium of sources for Hellenistic royal courtesans O. compiles the evidence grouped respectively by dynasties and kings. The king-lists of the Argead and Hellenistic dynasties provide quick orientation. In addition, the book contains a bibliography (pp. 286–308) and an index (pp. 309–17) containing a great number of individual names.

O.'s manuscript was finished in early 1996 so that any studies after that date are generally not taken into consideration (a particular exception is Grainger's Seleucid prosopography of 1997). The lapse of time up to the publication is the more regrettable seeing that especially in the past few years there have been new advances in the study of Hellenistic monarchies.

In general O. at times does not seem to have included all recent scholarly writing; for instance, he shows no awareness of Alan Cameron's important article on Bilistiche (*GRBS* 31 [1990], 287–311). Arsinoe II's date of death—according to O. 'at some point before 270' (p. 78)—has recently been discussed (269!) in E. Grzybek's *Du calendrier macédonien au calendrier ptolémaïque: problèmes de chronologie hellénistique* (Basel, 1990; cf. also H. Hauben, *CE* 133 [1992], 143–71; W. Ameling, *Gnomon* 66 [1994], 325–31). The identification of Ptolemy the Son has been made more accurate in a study by K. Buraselis (*Das hellenistische Makedonien und die Ägäis* [Munich, 1982]; all arguments now in W. Huss, *ZPE* 121 [1998], 229–50). Berenice Phernophoros' son (pp. 127–32) has by now been identified as Antiochus (W. Blümel, *EA* 20 [1993], 127–33). Identifying the fresco in the Villa Boscoreale as of Antigonus II, his mother Phila, and Menedemos of Eretria (p. 174), O. ought at least to have mentioned alternatives by M. Pfrommer, *Göttliche Fürsten in Boscoreale* (Mainz, 1993), pp. 58–9, and R. R. R. Smith (*JRA* 7 [1994], 100–28).

Neither the main chapters nor the lesser ones are followed by concluding remarks, which might have systematized and emphasized many of O.'s plausible observations. This would have been the more important in order to get away from the anecdotal access to the sources. An overall conclusion is also missing. Instead everything seems to be compressed into the introduction. It would have been particularly helpful to analyse the court environment in which the wives, courtesans, and their sons acted. For their interests could, indeed, be identical with those of royal *philoi*, and without forceful support it was hardly possible to realize intrigues with any hope of success. But, at any rate, it is one merit of the present study to have prepared and collected the existing material and to have examined the history of the Hellenistic dynasty from a different point of view.

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