of the *demos*. In other states, which have a professional army and a professional officer-class responsible to a commander-in-chief (e.g. the US President) or a ministry of war, this separation of powers is hardly surprising. It is merely because of the elected nature of the *strategoi* that one assumes (wrongly) that they might have had more extensive powers than other commanders in other states. Once told, we might be inclined to remark that the conclusion is rather obvious, but this is to a great extent because the author provides such cogent arguments in a book that offers much in addition to enrich our knowledge of the *strategia*.

University of Calgary WALDEMAR HECKEL

INTO THE LIMELIGHT

GRAHAM SHIPLEY: *The Greek World after Alexander, 323–30 BC*. Pp. xxxi + 568, figs, maps. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Paper, £19.99 (Cased, £60). ISBN: 0-415-04618-1.

The Hellenistic world has stepped smartly out of the shadows. Long the stepchild of classical studies, it has now attracted its second full-scale survey in English during the past decade, plus a host of monographs, conference volumes, and major works of reference. Graham Shipley's book exhibits the prominence of the subject.

S. has produced a readable, wide-ranging, and thoroughly up to date textbook. But more than that. He is not content simply to convey the conventional—nor indeed to condemn it. The judgements are judicious but pointed. S. leans heavily on prior scholarship, as is inevitable, even obligatory, in a study of this scope. Yet he reaches his own conclusions, while allowing the reader to ponder alternatives. The book enters controversies but avoids polemic. It deftly shifts between narrative portions and thematic discussions. A very large number of well-chosen quotations, from literary, epigraphic, and papyrological sources, provide vividness and immediacy. Footnotes (at the back of the book) are extensive but not oppressive, displaying an admirable command both of earlier influential scholarship and of the most recent contributions on a multitude of topics. This work will be much plundered by the teacher and researcher, and widely welcomed by the student.

The particular blend will not be to everyone's taste. Narrative segments are curtailed and condensed, which may cause some frustration to the novice who needs a firmer grip on the course of events. Separate lists of dates, dynastic chronologies, and genealogical tables, although helpful for reference, leave the narrative gaps unfilled. Individual personalities do not much emerge from the mix. One gets little sense of fascinating figures like Demetrios Poliorketes, Pyrrhos, Kleomenes III, Kallimakhos, Arkhimedes, and Polybios. S. leans to the larger picture. Yet even here there is a significant omission: no discussion of developments in art and architecture. S. supplies a number of illustrations, and topics like ruler portraits or urban planning do appear, but the subject receives no systematic treatment. A vital ingredient of Hellenistic culture, and a most revealing one, escapes view.

The book, however, contains numerous compensations. Chapters on the major kingdoms include valuable summaries of topography, terrain, landscape, and resources. A key chapter engages the central issue of the relationship between monarchic power and civic society in the individual communities of Hellenistic realms. Substantial analyses of religion, philosophy, literature, and, especially, science as means of expressing social

© Oxford University Press, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.1.109 Published online by Cambridge University Press

identity and articulating one's place in the cosmos add important dimensions to our understanding of the Hellenistic world.

Other virtues too command notice. S.'s wide reading of the scholarship allows him to bring new interpretations and revisionism to bear upon this survey. The book regularly questions rather than repeats standard views on a multiplicity of matters. A few examples must suffice. Greek movement into the east entailed neither 'Hellenization' of the alien nor a narrow exclusivity but a productive interchange, a two-way process (pp. 1, 58, 221–2, 270). Royal interventions in cities may more often have been welcomed than resented, and royal benefactions can reflect genuine piety as much as public relations (pp. 84–6). Civil strife within communities more commonly reveals struggles among privileged minorities than social upheaval or class struggle (pp. 132–3). Hellenistic states strove for supremacy and advantage, unconcerned with modern concepts of 'balance of power' and 'deterrence' (pp. 206–7).

Of course, the interpretative character of the work means that parts will generate more dissent than assent. So, for instance, S. conceives perhaps too cozy a relationship between kings and intellectuals. It is over-simple to link Theokritos with 'court poetry' by quoting a portion of *Idyll* 17, while omitting other verses that suggest irony or mockery (pp. 237–8). And a certain reductionism inheres in the characterization of scientists as advancing the agenda of the crown and representing the interests of colonialist exploitation (pp. 359–60, 365–6). But the textbook that provokes disagreements is far preferable to the one that conveys bland blends.

More broadly, S. delivers a frontal assault upon an old bromide too long dominant in this subject: that the Hellenistic era constituted an age of decline. The period represented (and in some accounts still represents) a falling off from the heights attained by classical Greece (especially Athens). Powerful monarchies stifled civic identity, drove subjects to seek solace in alien religions or universalist philosophies, and fell victim themselves to internal disintegration. S. dismantles the thesis from several directions. New gods did not drive out the old but added extra dimensions to a broadening religious horizon (pp. 170, 176). Ruler cult entailed neither cynical manipulation nor loss of ancestral faith but a new mode of relating civic needs to royal institutions (p. 162). Philosophic speculation went beyond mere escapism and framed a discourse to encompass the shifting rôle of the social élite (p. 190). Internal conflict did not disrupt Macedonian stability; and the relaxed rein held on Greece was a matter of policy rather than weakness (pp. 116, 128, 152). Rebellion in the Thebaid against the Ptolemies had more to do with distance from the center than increasing social discontent (p. 233). The loose structure of the Seleukid empire indicates diversity and deliberate decentralization rather than structural inadequacy (pp. 291, 295, 296, 312, 321, 325). Even Roman rule brought no devastating decline to Greece, just a shift in its urban and rural profile (p. 398). S. occasionally pushes the thesis to unnecessary lengths. How, for instance, does one distinguish between 'general background of discontent' and 'increasing social discontent' (p. 233)? But the thesis itself holds.

The issue gains sharpest definition in S.'s repeated insistence that the classical *polis* did not perish in the aftermath of Chaeronea. Traditional institutions continued to function, as active and vigorous as ever, councils proposed measures, assemblies passed decrees, and popular votes elevated candidates to office. The benefactions of wealthy donors enhanced civic pride rather than compromised it. And kings both bestowed and received favors, a reciprocal relationship between monarch and *polis* in which both gained advantage, not an oppressive control that squeezed the life out of the classical community (pp. 35, 60, 74–5, 77, 101–2,106, 130, 190). The argument

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.1.109 Published online by Cambridge University Press

is not a new one. But its enshrinement in a textbook may finally expel the antique misconception that the *polis* succumbed to the advent of Alexander.

Continuity is the hallmark of S.'s reconstruction. The Hellenistic world, in his view, marks no sharp break with the past. Precedents can be found for most of its practices, innovation was exceptional rather than characteristic. Macedonian rulership followed policies derived from Philip II (p. 128). Society and economy in Ptolemaic Egypt owed little to Greeks and Macedonians but looked back to the reigns of the Pharaohs and the Persians (p. 196). The Seleukids ran their kingdom much as the Achaemenids had before them (pp. 295, 324). The subordination of cities to monarchs in the Hellenistic age differed little from earlier adjustments to the supremacy of Athens or Persia (p. 3). The embrace of unfamiliar deities and cults represented nothing new; Greeks had always welcomed changes in the religious calendar and additions to their pantheon (pp. 155, 170). The opening of Hellenic culture to the outside did not await the anabasis of Alexander; Greek societies had long since been enriched by interaction with non-Hellenic peoples (p. 259). Even the patronage of intellectuals by the Ptolemies and the Attalids only mirrored the actions of near eastern royalty before them (p. 329).

Here the reader must exercise caution. The case for continuity is strong but overdone. Innovations slip through even in S.'s discussions: the emergence of the personal army as distinct from the Macedonian national army (pp. 47, 115); new urban forms and architectural complexes at places like Pergamon and Ai Khanum (p. 92); modifications and alterations introduced by the Seleukids that distinguished their empire from the Achaemenid model (p. 325); and the enthusiasm of Greeks abroad for the novelties of Hellenistic science (p. 329). S. acknowledges change but does not weave it smoothly into his larger fabric of a seamless transition.

S. carries the case too far. In the matter of ruler cult, for instance, he not only probes for precedents but denies the equation with divinity (pp. 156–61; cf. 64, 68, 70–1). Both endeavors strain the argument. Earlier examples are few, fleeting, and distant. And it is unsatisfactory to maintain that awards of a *temenos*, an altar, a cult statue, sacrifices, and games fell 'some way short of deification' (p. 156). Rulers were indeed considered gods, distinguished, to be sure, from the Olympians—but occasionally to the advantage of the former (as the ithyphallic hymn to Demetrios suggests). To minimize innovation here is to repress the dramatic changes of attitude that came with the age of Alexander and the *diadochoi*.

Other strains also surface as S. presses his point. He downplays the loss of life in Macedonian warfare, even suggesting that the fallen came largely from the élite ranks, a mere repetition of past experience (pp. 118–19). One can question that conclusion for precursors and contemporaries alike. The removal or reduction of civic privileges for large segments of society receives a Panglossian analysis: those who retained their privileges still exercised them (p. 129)! That neatly sidesteps the issue. The striking emergence of major public libraries under royal stimulus and patronage also diminishes in S.'s hands: near-eastern kings used to do it, and Aristotle had a big private collection (pp. 242–3), but they hardly account for the Hellenistic phenomenon.

The book, in fact, never addresses squarely the question of what constitutes continuity. If Hellenistic rulers 'inherited a tradition' of sponsoring geographers from their Persian predecessors (p. 361), this may mean adaptation of near-eastern practices, but it supplies no link with the Greek past. If political structures or religious developments show similarity to fourth-century examples (pp. 133, 165, 191), this does not exactly represent an outgrowth of long-standing tradition.

None of the above refutes S.'s broader claims for continuity. He rightly calls

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.1.109 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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.

University of California, Berkeley E. S. GRUEN

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.

© Oxford University Press, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.1.109 Published online by Cambridge University Press