surprising that a book with this title, aimed at undergraduates, should feature neither postmodernism nor post-structuralism in its index.

The few odd notes occur largely when M. moves away from economic history. Defining 'patriarchy' as 'male subordination of women' (p. 30) is misleading: they are related but by no means synonymous. The sentence: 'If ancient historians wish to avoid distorting their evidence by imposing anachronistic modern concepts on it, they must stay off the topic of "the ancient economy" altogether' (p. 33) overstates the case. A paragraph on ecology (p. 66) reads as if it is based on an out of date understanding of evolutionary adaptation, creating the misleading impression that both micro-organisms and wheat have some kind of adaptive agency. On p. 116, the suggestion that:

> the development of such practices as the seclusion of Athenian wives may be seen as the result of natural processes: natural selection favours those individuals with a pre-disposition to act in a particular way (e.g. locking up their wives), and so these traits become established within the population as less successful genetic strains die out

is an extremely poor example of how microevolution might be used to help understand social organization.

These minor quibbles aside, M. has produced a book that will surely succeed in encouraging undergraduates to view 'theory' with greater relish. The full notes and useful guide to further reading complete a text that should quickly and deservedly become established on reading lists.

University College London JAMES PAWLEY
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni358

PROTO-RACISM

B. ISAAC: *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*. Pp. xiv + 563, ills. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004. Cased, £29.95. ISBN: 0-691-11691-1.

Ever since Dodds published *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), in a post-war milieu cynical about the achievements of Western civilization, scholars seem to have been anxious to demonstrate that there were indeed 'disagreeably primitive things' poking up here and there through the cracks of Periclean rationalism (p. 192). The romantic myth of the glorious legacy of Greco-Roman culture has, by now, been well and truly debunked. In *Black Athena* (New Brunswick, 1987–91), for all its flights of semantic fancy, Bernal attempted to demonstrate that our inherited view of classical civilization was moulded by European racist scholars, both anti-black and anti-Semitic, infected by the imperialist triumphalism of the late nineteenth century. In his return to the ancient sources to construct the *Revised Ancient Model* of the origins of classical civilization, Bernal omitted to interrogate the ancient sources themselves. This Isaac, Lessing Professor of Ancient History at the University of Tel Aviv, does, in this meticulously researched and annotated work, which attempts to find the intellectual origins of modern racism and xenophobia in works of ancient Greek and Latin prose (some

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni359 Published online by Cambridge University Press

verse is included), ranging from fifth century Greece to Rome of the third century C.E. 'with occasional forays into the fourth century' (p. 15).

Like all conscientious scholars, I. begins with clarifying what exactly he means by race, racism, and proto-racism, the term he uses to categorize the invention of racism in classical antiquity. I. seems to be a social constructionist, without the jargon: he does not believe that races exist 'in fact' (pp. 31–8). Race is a 'merely theoretical' concept (p. 33) which 'tends to mean whatever the racist wants it to mean' (p. 515) and racism 'an attitude towards individuals and groups of peoples which posits a direct and linear connection between physical and mental qualities' (p. 23). In refining this definition, I. identifies what he believes are the most important features of racism: the attribution of collective traits (physical, intellectual and/or moral) to individuals or groups and the belief that these are unalterable, because they are determined by heredity or environment (climate or geography) or both. For I., racism is thus an invention of the human irrational, relentlessly seeking pseudo-rational arguments, such as purity of lineage and autochthony, as the Athenians did, to justify the assumed superiority of one race over another. Assumed superiority often results in domination and enslavement: imperialist ideology and racism are thus inextricably intertwined. In his painstaking attempt to limit the range of his definition further, I. distinguishes between racism and ethnic stereotyping: he believes that the former implies that the assumed characters of a people cannot change (as in Tacitus' views of the Germans), whereas the latter, usually based on cultural or social prejudices (as in Juvenal's view of the Greeks in Rome), is not underpinned by this assumption.

I.'s methodology is straightforward. Part 1 is general in scope and explores Greek and Roman views of other peoples and how the resultant stereotyping and proto-racism shaped imperialist ideology. In this section, I. analyses Aristotle's theory of 'natural slavery', its survival in some Roman thinking, Greek and Roman views of descent, lineage, eugenics, physiognomics, and comparisons of people with animals, as well as ancient fears about contact with foreigners and Roman ambivalence towards its conquered peoples. Part 2 is more specific: I. homes in on Greek and Roman views of eastern peoples, such as the Persians and the Parthians, and attitudes, *inter alios*, towards Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, Gauls, Germans, and Jews.

I. concludes that, although the Greeks and Romans did not practise the kinds of institutionalized racism, ethnic cleansing and genocide common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (pp. 163, 167–168, 235) proto-racist ideas are common in Greek and Roman texts from the fifth century B.C.E. onwards. 'It is possible', he argues, 'that in considering these phenomena in their early shape, we may gain a better understanding of their contemporary forms' (p. 516). Earlier he writes of advancing 'our understanding of the essence of racism and ethnic prejudice in all periods and societies in some respects' (p. 3).

I.'s study rests on a number of major assumptions. First, that the Greek and Roman texts served as 'prototypes' (pp. 1, 50) for racist theories developed in the eighteenth century by Buffon, Montesquieu, Hume, Kant, and others, which in turn were the predecessors of modern racist notions (pp. 5, 13), in particular, those of the Nazi period (e.g. p. 238). The influence of the classics on later racist ideologies is surely confined to the works of an intellectual élite which may have been used to justify some theories, but hardly the barbarous practices of modern scientific racism (as in Nazi Germany or apartheid South Africa). I. is not concerned about Greek and Roman racist practice, but how the ancients 'thought and wrote about others' (p. 6). This is an unfortunate omission, as a demonstrable link between theory and practice in the ancient world would have strengthened his argument about the enduring legacy

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni359 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of Greek and Roman proto-racism in the modern West. Modern racism has been experienced at the end of the machine-gun and the policeman's whip, not simply as a 'state of mind'. I doubt whether Eichmann or Verwoerd had copies of Aristotle's *Politics* or Tacitus' *Germania* next to their beds.

In suggesting that we owe to the Greeks and Romans 'some of the elementary concepts of discrimination and inequality that are still with us' (p. 516), I. reveals how essentially euro-centric his study is. The use of 'us' and expressions like 'our culture' (p. 516) assume a shared international culture, presided over by a very western *mos maiorum*. Racist theory and practices in China and Japan, or in Africa, where genocide has also occurred, were certainly not transmitted by the legacy of Greece and Rome. Of course, Chinese racism (towards Tibetans, for instance) may have a great deal in common with European racism, but these racisms do not have common roots. I. seems haunted by the spectre of classical diffusionism.

Furthermore, for all his constructionist assumptions, I. is a closet essentialist: he clearly believes that it is possible to distill the essence of racism 'in all periods and societies' (likewise he believes that there is a difference between 'actual reality' and popular perceptions of it, p. 457). Transhistorical and transcultural generalizations are the tools of the racist: it is precisely in contextualizing particular forms of racism (as I. attempts to do with the Greek and Roman texts) that understanding of the 'phenomenon' is deepened. The quest for origins is also often in vain. It is unclear precisely how a better understanding of contemporary forms of racism can be gained from a study of, for instance, early forms of environmental determinism. Surely a viewing and discussion of *Schindler's List* would result in a far better understanding of modern forms of racism than reading the Hippocratic text *Airs, Waters, Places*? *Quellenforschung* does not always result in greater understanding.

The second assumption underlying I.'s study concerns the nature of ancient readership. If ethnic stereotypes are used in genres like satire and oratory, I. believes that these impact on their audiences because they reflect commonly held opinions, values, and prejudices (pp. 42, 55, 225, 231–3, 235) or the 'current views' (p. 225) of the readers. If Juvenal's satires exaggerate, for example, the corruption of the Romans by easterners, they exaggerate 'feelings widely present' (p. 233); otherwise, believes I., the satire would lose its sting. The same point is made about Lucian (p. 343). The precise nature of the audiences of ancient literary texts, particularly in genres as rhetorical as oratory and satire, which make use of inherited *topoi*, is very difficult to assess. Literacy (however one defines it) was rare even at the height of the Roman empire, and readership, especially of so sophisticated a poet as Juvenal, must have been restricted to élites. Of course, the performative nature of oratory and satire implies a larger audience, but not a wide readership. Furthermore, both satire and oratory employ techniques to generate feelings which may not be 'widely present'. Hence Juvenal's *indignatio*. Whether he is giving vent to his own xenophobia or adopting a rhetorical persona that reflects the opinions of the ruling class or parodies them remains purely speculative. Widespread ethnic stereotyping or proto-racism cannot be assumed on the basis of satire or oratory.

Oratory has posturing in common with satire. When Cicero refers to Antony as a *belua* (pp. 202–3), it is difficult to accept that he is thereby demeaning Antony's humanity and presumably setting forth on the grim road which leads to Auschwitz. Emotive rhetorical exaggeration besmirching a political enemy in the context of a slave-owning ancient society, which did not have a concept of human rights and thus of the innate freedom of the individual, does not belong in a discussion of the alleged invention of racism in antiquity. I. is occasionally guilty of looking at ancient texts

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni359 Published online by Cambridge University Press

through the experiences of contemporary racism, which the very term *proto*-racism implies. Although I. is disarmingly honest about his own intellectual and emotional involvement in the subject and the inevitably 'coloured' attitudes of modern authors (pp. 51, 382, 440), it is questionable whether any scholar, working in the twenty-first century, can be 'dispassionate' about race and racism. If 'anti-semitism' is a confused modern term with clearly racist connotations, as I.'s excellent discussion of its usage demonstrates (pp. 442–6), can one justifiably use the term *proto-racism* of cultures which did not experience racism as we wretched moderns have? Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin entitled their collection of essays on ancient erotic experience *Before Sexuality* (Princeton, 1990), precisely because 'sexuality', as we know and experience it, is a specifically modern production (and obsession). Can one not make the same point about racism?

A further assumption is that there exists a hierarchy of racial intolerance. I.'s distinction between 'simple ethnic prejudice' (p. 350) and proto-racism, at times coupled together (p. 370), is difficult to take seriously. Accusing a people of cannibalism, if there is an implication that the people can be improved, is 'an extreme form of ethnic prejudice' (p. 214). The hostility towards the Jews in Greek and Roman texts 'represents ethnic hated and cannot be described as ancient racism or proto-racism' (p. 482), precisely because the terms of the earlier definition do not apply: the perceived negative characteristics of the Jews are not seen as unalterable. Yet Cicero on the Carthaginians is 'proto-racist' (p. 350) because he claims that the environment, which cannot be changed (i.e. the port city), makes the Carthaginians what they are. The Aristotelian notion that some people are born to be slaves 'could be described as the ultimate form of proto-racism' (p. 46). Modern racism, he believes, finds its 'most pathological expression' (p. 315) in the Nurnberger laws and apartheid. I. thus imagines that there is some sort of racist continuum, ranging from the simple to the pathological, from ethnic prejudice to legalized racism. Suggesting that there are degrees of racism, some of which are morally more odious than others, is precisely the kind of argument employed by many racists. In contemporary South Africa, one often hears statements like 'I hate blacks, but I am not a racist'. Adhering slavishly to his definition of racism and applying it rigidly to a wide range of texts results in the specious distinction I. makes.

Authors admittedly have very little to do with covers of their works. However, the cover of I.'s work depicting a very African Heracles strangling the Nubian priests of Busiris (Fig. 1 after p. 251) suggests that attitudes towards blacks in antiquity will be one of the major foci of his work. However, I. chooses not to include blacks (in the same way as, for instance, Egyptians or Jews) as 'they did not form much of an actual presence in the Greek and Roman worlds' and 'no country inhabited by blacks was ever part of the Greek and Roman empires' (p. 49). By 'blacks' I. seems to mean 'Ethiopians' (p. 50), not Egyptians, whom he considers a 'specifically Eastern people' (p. 256). Many African scholars (and black scholars elsewhere) would contest this. As someone who attempts to teach the classics in an African context, I found this omission, which contributes to the marginalization of blacks from the history of classical antiquity, deeply disappointing.

For all its helpful summaries, paraphrases, and sensible conclusions, I.'s work never really rises above the commonsensical (and pedestrian). Some may find this refreshing in an academic milieu where obfuscation rather than clarity has become *de rigueur*. However, in a work which purports to examine the relationship between texts, contexts, and power, I found the absence of any reference to post-structuralist thought disappointing, if not alarming. I.'s learning, especially in Renaissance and

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni359 Published online by Cambridge University Press

early modern racist theory, is impressive and enlightening, but his analyses of the 'patterns' of proto-racist thinking in antiquity and their relationship to imperialism require deeper theoretical grounding.

There are many typographical errors, chiefly in the extensively quoted passages of Greek and Latin, too numerous to cite here. Many of these involve misplaced Greek breathings (e.g. p. 65 n. 41, p. 212 n. 176, p. 300 n. 176) and/or accents (e.g. p. 154 n. 394, p. 343 n. 92, p. 363 n. 64) and the detachment of the Latin suffix *-que* (p. 235 n. 36, p. 377 n. 37). French and Spanish spelling and accentuation also suffer (e.g. p. 22 n. 51, p. 23, p. 226 n. 6, p. 466 n. 120, p. 477 n. 186). There are some stylistic lapses which result in gobbledegook of the following kind: 'A consequence of the existence of such theories is therefore that ideas of concerning group characteristics which are based on them can in some cases resemble racist ideas even by the narrow definitions cited in the Introduction, for instance Memmi's original proposal . . .' (p. 78). To add insult to injury, the list of illustrations (p. ix) mixes up Figures 3 and 4. One expects better of Princeton University Press.

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg M. LAMBERT
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni359

STATUE BASES

A. KOSMOPOULOU: *The Iconography of Sculptured Statue Bases in the Archaic and Classical Periods*. Pp. xxxii + 259, ills. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 0-299-17640-1.

The aim of this book is the collection of Greek bases with sculpted figural reliefs and the examination and analysis of their iconography. Half of the book is devoted to a catalogue of sixty-four examples of statue bases, which constitutes the currently extant corpus of this type of sculpture of the archaic and classical periods of Greek art. Preceding the catalogue are eight chapters discussing forms and types of relief bases, and the three primary functions of these bases for the two artistic periods under consideration: as dedications; as supports for funerary monuments; and as supports for cult statues.

The base as a separately worked element first appeared in Greek sculpture in the mid-seventh century B.C. Their origin is explained by two primary theories, one derivative of Neo-Hittite or North Syrian prototypes; the other autochthonous, coinciding with the appearance of monumental sculptures in Greece. Kosmopoulou favors the latter explanation, stating that the addition of a base between a statue and the ground emphasizes the artificial conception of the sculpted figures. K. overstates the significance of the relief bases, however, when she declares that they became almost as important as the statues they supported (p. 5). Surely, their significance to ancient viewers is impossible to reconstruct given the low number of bases that can actually be securely associated with their intended statues.

Relief bases are either solid blocks of stone with cuttings on the top for the insertion of the sculpted monument they supported or are architectural constructions composed of orthostates, a type introduced in the second half of the fifth century B.C. The orthostatic type is believed to have been the invention of Pheidias, devised to

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni359 Published online by Cambridge University Press