CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

A. BENCIVENNI: *Progetti di riforme costituzionali nelle epigrafi greche dei secoli IV–II a.C.* (Tarsie, Studi di Antichistica 1.) Pp. xvi + 430, map, ills. Bologna: Lo Scarabeo Editrice, 2003. Paper, €40. ISBN: 88-8478-053-5.

Joining the chorus of those who wish to reassert the continuing vitality of the Greek *poleis* and their institutions after 338 B.C. (but apparently unaware of the membership in that chorus of Rhodes with Lewis, *The Decrees of the Greek States*), B. studies eleven inscribed documents or dossiers of documents from between the time of Alexander the Great and that of Eumenes II, in which a king or one of his subordinates orders or authorizes an institutional change in a city or cluster of cities. With a short introduction and a short conclusion, she devotes a chapter to each of her texts.

The texts, some of them recent discoveries, are: (1) Alexander's first letter (only) to Chios, now Rhodes & Osborne 84. *A*; (2) the two inscriptions concerning reconciliation in Mytilene, now R&O 85; (3) the dossier of Eresus, now R&O 83; (4) the restoration of exiles at Tegea, now R&O 101; (5) Ptolemy's prescription for Cyrene, *SEG* ix 1; (6) the *sympoliteia* of Latmus and Pidasa, *SEG* xlviii 1563; (7) the synoecism of Teos and Lebedus, *SIG*^{3} 344; (8) the synoecism of Smyrna and Magnesia-by-Sipylus, *IK Magn. Sip.* 1 = *IK Smyrna* 573; (9) the arrangements of Seleucus II for Mylasa, *Labraunda* III. i 3, 4, 5, 7, 8; (10) the refoundation of Arsinoe, *SEG* xxix 1426; (11) the grant of *polis* status to Tyriaeum, *SEG* xlvii 1745.

For each text B. provides an introductory lemma, with details of the stone and very full bibliography; Greek text and Italian translation (the texts are not re-edited, but she imports recent improvements into and occasionally questions readings in the base text which she has used); then follows not a point-by-point commentary, but the discussion of a series of issues, focused more on the procedures by which the king/general and the city/cities have interacted to bring about the result than on the details of the result finally arrived at. The discussions are heavily annotated: there is one page, 159, which has only one line of main text, all the rest being occupied by footnote, and there are at least two with only two lines of main text. Most chapters end with a summary of the procedural stages envisaged and a catalogue of key expressions used, with cross reference to other texts.

B. is generally level-headed, and is sometimes able to improve on the conclusions of her predecessors: for instance, in Chapter 10 she has a more convincing reconstruction than C. P. Jones of the procedures which lie behind the surviving texts; in Chapter 9 she has a particularly good discussion of the course of events into which the texts concerning Mylasa and Labraunda have to be fitted. However, some points are pursued rather laboriously, such as the question whether Alexander's message to Chios is better categorized as a letter or as a *diagramma* (she prefers the latter). Her conclusion emphasizes the variety of institutional changes covered by her range of texts—change of constitution, restoration of exiles, *sympoliteia*, synoecism, territorial changes, refoundation, upgrading to *polis* status—and refuses to make crude generalizations. She does note, however, that while the freedom of the cities was always subject to the favour of the kings, and that in each of her cases except the last the initiative came from the king or general (and even in the last case she argues for reactivation of a plan originally made by Antiochus III), there is more of a tendency

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to authoritative command in the earlier texts but to polite encouragement of (correctly exercised, of course) local autonomy in the later.

The book has its origin in a doctoral thesis of the University of Bologna. It was a very good thesis, in which B. learned a great deal by working thoroughly on a limited but well-chosen body of material and on issues which arise from the study of that material, and has become an accomplished scholar. It will certainly be useful to anybody interested in the texts she has studied and the questions she has investigated; but, although it is paper-bound and cheaply priced, and although it includes a translation of each of the texts studied, it is a severely academic book which takes a good deal of background knowledge for granted, and it is not likely to appeal to a wide range of readers.

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ALEXANDRIA

A. Hirst, M. Silk (edd.): *Alexandria, Real and Imagined*. (Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London, Publications 5.) Pp. xxx + 401, ills. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004. Cased, £55. ISBN: 0-7546-3890-1.

'What is resumed in the word Alexandria? In a flash my mind's eye shows me a thousand dust tormented streets. Flies and beggars own it today—and those who enjoy an intermediate existence between either.' The opening of Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* is far from the glamorous city of the Ptolemies, now submerged beneath sea and a modern city. Only in recent years have advances in underwater archaeology in particular begun to reveal a little what has been lost of Alexandria.

The present volume of essays, some slighter than others, has its origins in a conference held at King's College London in 1997, though it is clear that the contributors have had a chance to develop their papers since then. The range of essays is broad indeed, from Ptolemaic scholarship to Cavafy, from Athenaeus to the cafes of the nineteenth century, from Alexander to Muhammad Ali. The editors, Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk, have chosen to highlight the tension between the real and the imagined in the title they have given to the collection, as the essays uncover a multiplicity of Alexandrias. Inevitably the imagined is prominent in literary accounts; there is Michael Trapp's illuminating essay on images of Alexandria in the Second Sophistic which interestingly argues that the classicizing mentality of these writers tended to play down Alexandria just as it did the rest of the post-classical world. More modern literary figures are featured strongly in the latter half of the book: the Greek Cavafy (David Ricks, Khaled Fahmy), the Egyptians Ahmad Shawqi, Edwar al-Kharrat and the Nobel-prizewinning Naguib Mahfouz (Azza Kararah), and the British residents Durrell and E. M. Forster (David Roessel). Reality enters most sharply in George Contis's essay on health and disease; schistosomiasis, a disease caused by a parasitic canal-dwelling worm, has attacked the inhabitants of the Nile Delta from Pharaonic times to the present day, leaving its traces in mummies as far back as the Twentieth Dynasty.

The title is at once evocative and sufficiently loose to encompass almost anything

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