Greek History

One of the most enduring challenges facing the historian of ancient Greek politics is how best to elucidate the relationship between political ideas and the history of political activity. This is one of the three 'problematics' set out in *Paul Cartledge's book;[11] the others are the question of the relevance of class (or social status) to politics, and the rise and fall of democracy. Cartledge stresses that politics, a materialist phenomenon that pervades all social life, is prior to political theory: the anti-democratic views of Plato (and, to a lesser extent, Aristotle), for instance, originated in their observations on the Athenian democratic system and its treatment of Socrates. The history of democracy dominates Cartledge's account of Greek thought: monarchy, on the other hand, 'was never normal or normative' (29) but nevertheless became a preoccupation of fourth-century intellectuals. Cartledge sees Cleisthenes as the inventor of democracy (Solon's enfranchisement of a broader spectrum of the citizen body was 'demotic' rather than democratic); Herodotus, however, did not realize this because he was misled by an aristocratic source that dressed up Cleisthenes' reforms as 'business as usual'. Democracy was a primarily Athenian phenomenon, and one chiefly to be associated with the classical period: it was extinguished in the Hellenistic era, and Roman democracy never progressed beyond equality of voting. Three less orthodox discussions merit particular mention: Cartledge explains Socrates' fate by reference to Athenian religious belief; he provides a utopian view of Hellenistic Sparta; and he portrays the Old Oligarch as an outsider, writing for an audience of beleaguered aristocrats in Athens' subject states. This short book's span is enormous: the eleven chapters (contextualized by six bursts of historical narrative) stretch from the world of Homer to the Roman conquest and the modern legacy of politics. The conciseness of the overview is, however, compensated by thorough reference to recent scholarly debates. Throughout, Cartledge stresses the 'otherness' of ancient political thought: it lacked an equivalent to the modern form of liberalism, which requires a more centralizing state than was available in antiquity. The differences between ancient and modern politics are neatly outlined: democracy was a total social phenomenon in antiquity rather than an institutionalized political system as it is in the modern world; and political theory was invented in the fifth century BC, but never aspired to the value-free analysis of Weberian political science. A closing chapter explores the *logacy* (the 'legacy of logos') of Greek political thought, and the possibility that it offers an inspiration for extending a feeling for political responsibility in the modern world. But Cartledge avoids trite solutions and the emphasis, even at the end, is upon difference. The strength of this book is its refreshingly broad view of political thought; it will offer undergraduates a challenging entrance to that subject and its relationship to the history of politics.

Language and History in Ancient Greek Culture republishes a selection of papers by Martin Ostwald, an outstanding scholar of Greek literature and history, who died on 10 April 2010.[12] The first section collects papers on fundamental political concepts, arguing that citizenship in ancient Greece was related to a sense of

[11] *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*. By Paul Cartledge. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xxiii + 169. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-0-521-45455-1; paperback £14.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-45595-4.

[12] *Language and History in Ancient Greek Culture*. By Martin Ostwald. Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Pp. vi + 322. Hardback £42.50, ISBN: 978-0-8122-4149-5.

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belonging and was not a matter of rights (Chapter 1); explaining the concept of *isokratia* at Herodotus 5.92a1 as a reference to a probouleutic political system (Chapter 2); elucidating problems in understanding the historical reality of oligarchy (Chapter 3); portraying the Athenians of the late fifth century as imperialistic pragmatists, who were uninterested in intervening in the affairs of their allies for the sake of democratic solidarity (Chapter 4); clarifying the classical philosophers' view of warfare as the 'manifestation of natural difference among mankind' (86) and as a necessity harnessed in pursuit of the good life (Chapter 5). The second section consists of essays on the Greek concept of *nomos* and the *nomos–physis* debate in the fifth century (Chapters 6 and 8) and Ostwald's classic exposition of the negatively defined concept of *agraphos nomos* (Chapter 7). The third section consists of six essays on political institutions, arguing that, in the fifth century, the people's control of the scrutiny of magistrates meant that Athens was truly democratic (Chapter 9); and drawing out the evidence for the centrality of the naukraric system to the public funding of the navy and cavalry in archaic Athens (Chapter 10). The essay on Diodotus (of Thucydides' Mytilenean debate) is another classic, arguing that he, unlike Kleon, was a public official who would thus be accountable for his actions (Chapter 11). The piece on Athens and Chalkis (Chapter 12) views fifth-century Athenian intervention as moderate; the acceptance of [Aristotle's] claim of an Areopagite ascendancy in the aftermath of the Persian Wars (*Ath. Pol.* 25.1) is more controversial (Chapter 13); Chapter 14 offers an anti-Platonic view of the sophists. The collection closes with an essay expanding Asheri's view of Herodotus as a tragic historian (Chapter 15) and a view of the intellectual bias of Thucydides (Chapter 16). Many of the papers were originally published in scarce *Festschriften* and edited volumes (one regrets, however, that his 1995 paper, 'Freedom and the Greeks' was not included), and this collection will therefore be welcomed by scholars and students. Numerous important themes emerge, among them the view that democratic ideology was very much a secondary motivation in the history of Athens and the development of democracy (especially Chapters 4 and 9). Some of the papers are challenging, but even the most difficult are accessible to even the Greek-less student on account of their lucid argumentation and conclusions. Jeremy Tanner's review article (*JHS* 129 [2009], 89–109) suggests that the emergence, over the past twenty years, of comparative Sino-Hellenic studies owes much to both the rising profile of China in the modern West and the broadening of classical studies: this is confirmed in Hyun Jin Kim's *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China*, which offers a comparative investigation of ancient Greek and Chinese literary views on ethnicity.[13] Its starting point is the view that the Greek–barbarian antithesis in Greek thought emerged in the context of the late sixth-century Ionian revolt; previously, the Greeks saw themselves as part of a wider eastern Mediterranean universe. As the fifth century wore on, the Athenians began to challenge their sense of inferiority by labelling barbarians as physically and culturally lesser. Similarly, in China, the Warring States period (480–221 BC) saw the emergence of a conceptual division between the Hua Xia (the group that constituted the core of the Han) and the non-Hua Xia. Significantly, however, the Hua Xia view of the barbarian lacked the genetic element of Greek ethnicity: they identified education and customs

[13] *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China*. By Hyun Jin Kim. London, Duckworth, 2009. Pp. 217. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-0-7156-3807-1.

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as the key distinguishing features between ethnic groups. The second half of the book compares the work of Herodotus and the *Shiji* of Sima Qian (second/first century BC): Herodotus, unlike the Chinese historians, was capable of cultural relativism and admiration of other cultures, owing to the fact that he wrote with an East–Mediterranean perspective; his Chinese counterparts lived in a civilization without rival. However, the place of the Skythians in Herodotus Book 4 (Kim takes the view that this portrayal is largely accurate) is echoed in Sima Qian's view of the nomadic Xiongnu: notable overlaps include their shared custom of drinking blood to consecrate treaties (120). The final chapter argues that, whereas the Greeks, struggling to assert themselves in the eastern Mediterranean, went to great lengths to try to differentiate themselves from local rivals (the Lydians, for example), the Chinese, as expansionist aggressors, were willing and able to absorb foreign cultures and ethnic groups. Kim's work offers a creative Sino-Hellenic perspective while setting in striking relief the historical context of Greek and Herodotean views on ethnicity.

Michael Flower's study on the importance and role of the seer in ancient Greece excellently brings out the complexities that one faces when trying to decode ancient religious practices and beliefs.[14] The *Seer in Ancient Greece* examines the role of the seer in his (and more importantly her) social context of the archaic and classical periods (800–300 BC). Flower stresses the non-marginal role of the seer in Greek society. In fact, seers were often members of the elite who were also highly respected and received honours from grateful communities. Drawing parallels from Near-Eastern practices, Flower shows that the Greek seer adapted to the Greek social context in order to meet social requirements for divination. Chapter 2, in particular, is a very good discussion of the terminology used for seers (it demonstrates the difference, for example, between *mantis*, which was on the whole a positive term, and *chresmologos*, which had negative connotations), the lack of specialization in performing divination (contrary to Near-Eastern practices), and the importance of family connections (whether genetic or adopted) as a means of transferring knowledge; and it emphasizes the significance of charisma to the successful seer. One of the more innovative arguments in the book is that literary representations of seers, in epic and tragedy, can be used to understand their position in Greek society. Arguing against the recent tendency to dissociate 'real' religion from its depiction in tragedy, Flower convincingly makes the case that not only did art imitate life but life and art 'influence each other and coexist in a symbiotic relationship' (94). In other words, real seers would condition their behaviour and performance according to famous literary counterparts (such as Calchas or Teiresias). Perhaps the most important contribution of this book is the chapter on female seers. Flower discusses the existing evidence: literary references, such as Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, who, irrespective of whether or not she was a historical person, was clearly recognizable to Plato's audience; an epitaph relief from Mantineia, depicting a woman holding a liver, which demonstrates the performance of hepatoscopy; and a third-century epitaph from Thessaly of a seer named Satyra. He then proceeds to examine the most famous female seer in the Greek world: Pythia at Delphi. He argues that Pythia was able to deliver hexameter verse herself; his careful analysis of the four oracles given to the Greeks before the Persian wars (and recorded in Herodotus)

[14] *The Seer in Ancient Greece*. By Michael A. Flower. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2008. Pp. xviii + 305. 19 illustrations. Hardback £23.95, ISBN: 978-0-520-25339-5.

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makes a strong case for his argument that they were composed by the same person, who, Flower contends, was Aristonice, the Pythia at the time: 'the thought is disjointed, the syntax obscure, the meter rough and the vocabulary simple and repetitious', suggesting that that they were produced by a person 'in a high state of mental agitation. If these are not the precise words of the Pythia in 481, then they are a superb imitation of what a genuinely ecstatic woman would have uttered' (236–7). In a world of uncertainty, the seer functioned as a bridge to divine knowledge: he or she had to recognize and then interpret correctly the signs given by the gods. Flower's approachable style makes this ideal for students who seek an introduction to recent debates about the role of divination in ancient Greek society, while it communicates excellently the theoretical complexities in modern approaches to religion, divination, and the question of belief. The well-established *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies* series has produced a new instalment on Thucydides, edited by Jeffrey Rusten.[15] This book follows the normal format of the series: that is, a number of classic and influential articles on the ancient historian are collected, in some cases translated into English and made accessible in one handy volume. The emphasis is on Thucydides the writer rather than the historical period of the Peloponnesian War. With the exception of Rusten's introductory chapter on Thucydides and his readers, all other essays have been published elsewhere, but many of them only in relatively inaccessible volumes or in languages other than English. All Greek is translated. This volume will certainly make the use of these essential articles easier for most students and scholars. Rusten provides a useful synthesis of Thucydidean scholarship, which is not an easy task, considering the importance of this author for the discipline of Classics and Ancient History. He is successful in covering a lot of ground, such as Thucydidean readership and reception, or the 'standard' questions in relation to his work: completeness, speeches, use of sources, politics, narratology, and so forth. His up-to-date bibliographical references (as well as the select bibliography, which is organized thematically at the end) will be invaluable. There are three more essays in the introductory section (W. Robert Connor's 'A Post-Modernist Thucydides?'; Kenneth J. Dover's 'Thucydides as History and as Literature'; and Simon Hornblower's 'Intellectual Affinities'). The rest of the essays are arranged according to book, and there is a final section on the reception of Thucydides (ancient, modern, and contemporary). It is not simple or easy to arrange such essays into thematic sections and it is inevitable that some essays will overlap in their coverage; the editor's decision, therefore, to arrange essays by book, is straightforward and a good solution to the problem of structuring. But that said, it is hard to explain the omission of Book 8. Indeed, an essay on Tissaphernes[16] or on Thucydides' treatment of the Four Hundred[17] would only enrich the volume. Nonetheless, this is an extremely useful collection and we should be glad that now even the German-less among us can read Hermann Strasburger's seminal article on 'Thucydides and the Political Self-portrait of the

[15] *Thucydides*. Edited by Jeffrey S. Rusten. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. x + 519. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-0-19-920620-9; paperback £35, ISBN: 978-0-19-920619-3.

[16] e.g. J. Hyland's 'Thucydides' Portrait of Tissaphernes Re-examined', in C. Tuplin (ed.), *Persian Responses. Political and Cultural Interaction with(in) the Achaemenid Empire* (Swansea, 2007), included in the bibliography and reviewed in this journal (*G&R* 55 [2008], 291–2).

[17] e.g. M. Taylor, 'Implicating the Demos', *JHS* 122 (2002), 91–108.

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Athenians'. Finally, a new translation of Thucydides, which proves to be accurate, readable, useful, and packed with up-to-date information and explanatory notes.[18] Martin Hammond (translation) and P. J. Rhodes (introduction and notes) have done an excellent job in creating a translation that should satisfy everyone's needs, from the student with no Greek to the academic staff in need of a critical approach to this extremely important text. The introduction serves its purpose wonderfully, providing useful background knowledge (on the events of the Peloponnesian War and Thucydides' life), as well as a sober approach to some of the trickiest methodological problems in Thucydides' work, such as the speeches or his omissions, or modern methods of interpretation, such as narratology. Similarly, the translation is an exemplum of readable English, while also staying close to Thucydidean language. The notes provide up-to-date bibliographical references (with a preference for scholarship written in English). The index is extremely useful and expanded to include many subcategories. This book deserves to be the standard translation of Thucydides that everyone will use and enjoy, and should replace Rex Warner's translation in every student's and teacher's shelves.

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Roman History

No question what must head this review: Alison Cooley's *Res Gestae Divi Augusti.*[19] Few Roman historians at any level fail to have contact with this document, of which there have been useful editions, translations, commentaries, and studies. The present volume offers all these and is up-to-date, scholarly, and attractively presented, making it suitable for students. The substantial Introduction presents the document at Rome and in its provincial contexts. It examines the language, messages, and date of composition, and ends with the transmission of the three versions and reinterpretations (notably Tacitus and the *Apocolocyntosis* on the one hand and Mussolini on the other). It is a boon to have versions of the text on facing pages, for a great merit of this production is to present Greek and Latin versions above, English of each below, bringing out the differences, a topic of the Introduction. On dating Cooley is crisp (June–July AD 14). Textual variants between Cooley's composite text (no *apparatus criticus*) and that of J. Scheid (*Les Belles Lettres*, 2007) are listed in an appendix. The bulk lies in the 176-page commentary: brisk, clear, authoritative, and illustrated with coins. The maps, too, are helpful (but make Anatolian routes look like the Circle

[18] *Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War*. A new translation by Martin Hammond. With an introduction and notes by P. J. Rhodes. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. lxiv + 720. 10 maps. Paperback £10.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-282191-1.

[19] Res Gestae Divi Augusti. *Text, Translation, and Commentary.* By Alison E. Cooley. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xviii + 317. 5 maps, 2 tables, 38 figures. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-0-521-84152-8; paperback £16.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-60128-3.

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