grappling with Tacitus' prose, of course, but the volume will be a wonderful companion for serious students of the work as well.

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Greek History

Four volumes in this review constitute important contributions to the study of ancient documents and their employment in antiquity, as well as their value for modern historical research. Paola Ceccarelli has written a monumental study of letter-writing and the use of writing for long-distance communication in Ancient Greece; Karen Radner has edited a volume on state correspondence in ancient empires; Christopher Eyre's book concerns documents in Pharaonic Egypt; and Peter Liddel and Polly Low have edited a brilliant collection on the uses of inscriptions in Greek and Latin literature. The first three volumes have major consequences for the study of the workings of ancient state systems, while those by Ceccarelli, Eyre, and Liddel and Low open new avenues into the study of the interrelationship between written documents and literature.

Ceccarelli offers a comprehensive account of Greek letters, that ranges from the archaic to the Hellenistic period, and which covers, with equal attention, both the epigraphic findings of letters and epistolary communication recorded on inscriptions, and the role and representation of letters in ancient Greek literature.[1] She focuses extensively on two major themes: the first is the way in which a letter establishes a communication between addressor and addressee, and the ways in which this mode can be employed to circulate ideas or to frame diplomatic relationships; the second is the secrecy enabled by communication through letter-writing, and the dangers and possibilities generated by this feature. A major advantage of the book is its attention to issues of development and change: the emergence of and change in the format of letter-writing, the emergence of epistolary treatises, the changes in the employment and representation of letters in historiography or public inscriptions. The book includes two invaluable catalogues of surviving private and official letters.

Ceccarelli's wide-ranging cultural history of letter-writing can be profitably read alongside the volume on state correspondence edited by Radner.[2] The latter includes chapters on New Kingdom Egypt (Mynářová) and the Hittite (Weeden) empires from the second millennium BC, as well as contributions on the Neo-Assyrian (Radner), Babylonian (Jursa), Persian (Kuhrt), Hellenistic (Bencivenni), and Roman (Corcoran) empires from the first millennium onwards. While Ceccarelli focuses largely on written communication within and between city-states, this volume concentrates on correspondence as a significant aspect of the internal working and external

[1] *Ancient Greek Letter Writing. A Cultural History (600 BC–150 BC)*. By Paola Ceccarelli. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xx + 435. 1 map. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-19-967559-3.

[2] *State Correspondence in the Ancient World. From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire*. Edited by Karen Radner. Oxford Studies in Early Empires. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xv + 306. 53 illustrations. Hardback £48, ISBN: 978-0-19-935477-1.

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relationships of ancient empires (but the comparison between Ceccarelli's discussion of Hellenistic royal letters and Bencivenni's chapter provides interesting common ground). The book covers communication among the officers and functionaries of an empire (Neo-Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian), between the imperial centre and subject rulers and communities (Egypt, Hellenistic, Roman), and finally between empires and other states (Hittite). The infrastructure for a postal system as a means of easy communication between imperial centre and peripheries – an original creation of the Neo-Assyrian empire – is a major issue of discussion (alongside the Roman decision to eschew the relay system). Other issues include the degree of standardization in terms of form, etiquette, and media (with major differences between second- and first-millennium empires), and the extent to which empires employed one or multiple languages for their internal and external communication (the use of Aramaic by the Neo-Assyrians and Persians provides a stimulating common thread).

Eyre's book provides an important contribution to the study of the use of documents in antiquity.[3] While it focuses on Pharaonic Egypt and will be of major value for Egyptologists, its findings have major implications for all ancient historians. Compared to Greek and Roman societies, Egypt might appear as a heavily bureaucratized regime, but behind this bureaucratic façade, literacy in Egypt was the craft skill of a caste of scribes who effectively ran Egyptian society; while this skill had enormous prestige, social practices and state functions continued on a primarily oral basis, and written documents never acquired autonomous power and importance. This disjuncture will be of major significance for historians interested in how early states functioned, and how different kinds of documents were used. The reader will find important discussions of the use of documents in settling disputes, running estates, or taking censuses; equally fascinating is Eyre's exploration of the use of documents to record works of literature in a society that lacked the book trade as a means of disseminating knowledge and culture. For those who have followed Jan Assmann's work on textual and cultural memory, Eyre's discussion of the use of documents to process, store, and record information will provide highly stimulating reading.

The volume by Liddel and Low on inscriptions in ancient literature includes an extensive introduction alongside sixteen papers, divided into two main sections.[4] The first section concerns the employment of 'real' inscriptions in Greek and Latin prose; the second focuses on the employment of the imagery and rhetoric of inscriptions in ancient literature, exploring both what this tells us about the epigraphic awareness of the authors' audience and the variety of ways in which it is put to use. Contributors cover a wide range of literary genres, including historiography (Kosmetatou, Langslow), oratory (Petrovic), biography (Haake), 'travel-writing' (Tzifopoulos), poetry (Day, Fearn, LeVen, Dinter, Nelis and Nelis-Clément, Houghton), drama (Lougovaya), and novels (Zadorrojnyi), as well as a variety of epigraphic genres, including dedications, epigrams, decrees, inventories, and epitaphs. This is a very rich collection with many threads for future

[3] *The Use of Documents in Pharaonic Egypt*. By Christopher Eyre. Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 425. 18 figures. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-19-967389-6.

[4] *Inscriptions and Their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature*. Edited by Peter Liddel and Polly Low. Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 403. 13 illustrations. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-966574-7.

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exploration. Particularly fruitful are its implications with regard to the uses of inscriptions for the study of the past in different ancient genres, as well as the ways in which the uses of and reactions to inscriptions in ancient texts provide a crucial avenue for exploring the epigraphic habits of different periods and areas of the ancient world.

The next five books in this review concern Athens and Athenian democracy. The traditional model of Athenian history is based on a structuralist understanding of the *polis* as a citizen club, divided by a clear line between the adult male citizen insiders, who ran the important institutions, and various excluded others (women, metics, slaves). Among the growing number of books that express dissatisfaction with this image and seek to complement it or replace it, two recent works are included here.

Traditional models of Athenian democracy tend to focus on Athenian institutions such as the assembly and the law courts, as well as the adult male citizens who had the right to participate in them. Alex Gottesman challenges this approach with a book that offers a stimulating new perspective.[5] His text is the first one devoted to the non-institutional settings of Athenian democracy and their impact on Athenian politics and society. The politics of the street, as he names it, involves the various social and economic non-institutional settings in which citizens, metics, women, and slaves engaged with each other for a variety of purposes: Gottesman focuses in particular on the Athenian agora as a setting that mixed politics, exchange, and social interactions. These settings and encounters created networks that cut across status distinctions and had an impact on the institutional politics. Elite politicians and ordinary Athenians tried to take advantage of the politics of the street in order to sway public opinion and achieve results within the institutional settings. Gottesman examines the theatrics of supplication and the creation of publicity stunts, but perhaps the best chapter in the book is his exploration of how Athenian slaves employed the politics of the street to change masters, stake claims to freedom or even citizenship, and more generally enhance their condition. Gottesman's attempts to trace changes in the politics of the street in Athens can be interpreted in other ways; nevertheless, this is a path-breaking book that fruitfully builds on recent research to provide an overall new perspective on Athenian politics and society.

Sara Wijma's book focuses on the participation of metics in Athenian religious life.[6] Traditional accounts of citizenship have taken their cue from Aristotle's view of citizenship as participation in rule and judgment. An alternative understanding, which is gaining influence primarily among archaic historians, views citizenship from a performative perspective, and emphasizes a range of social and cultural activities as constitutive of participation in the *polis*. From this perspective, participation included a variety of groups beyond male citizens, but on a differential basis according to context, aims, and time. The Athenian *polis* and its *demes* constructed a spectrum of forms of participation for women, boys and girls, *ephebes* (adolescents), and metics. Building on this approach, Wijma examines the participation of metics in various Athenian festivals (Panathenaea, Lenaea, City Dionysia, Hephaestea), their role in the religious life of

[5] *Politics and the Street in Democratic Athens*. By Alex Gottesman. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 247. 6 illustrations. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-04168-4.

[6] *Embracing the Immigrant. The Participation of Metics in Athenian Polis Religion (5th–4th Century BC)*. By Sara M. Wijma. Historia Einzelschriften 233. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2014. Pp. 197. Hardback £57.12, ISBN: 978-3-515-10642-9.

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Athenian *demes*, and, finally, the Thracian *orgeones* of Bendis, a unique case where a group of metics was organized to take care of a *polis* cult. Wijma provides a very useful collection of the relevant evidence; her choice to approach it not as a static synchrony of 'the classical period' but as part of a chronological development of Athenian attitudes and reactions is undoubtedly in the right direction.

Religion, politics, and a chronological perspective are also the focus of an important book by Alexander Rubel, originally published in 2000.[7] Rubel explores the religious experience of the Peloponnesian War and Athenian internal and external politics during the period. The issue of a supposed religious and political crisis in fifth-century Athens used to be a popular topic when Greek history and religion were approached from a rationalist and modernist perspective. While functionalist and structuralist approaches have moved our attention from belief to ritual, and historians have generally preferred long-term synchronic accounts, Rubel makes a persuasive case for the need to reintegrate religion and politics and to appreciate the significance of conjuncture and great events on Athenian politics and religion. The book examines a variety of impiety trials (the Sophists, the mutilation/profanation trials, the Arginusae trial, and Socrates' trial), alongside the religious experience of the Plague, the introduction of new gods, and the construction of religious buildings. While one may not accept all of Rubel's arguments, this is an important case study of how to reconstruct late fifth-century history without Thucydides and how to balance continuity, conjuncture, and long-term change in Athenian politics and religion.

Montesquieu famously argued that different regimes are characterized by their peculiar values: republics by virtue, monarchies by honour, and despotisms by fear. In his recent book, Ryan Balot argues in favour of a specific form of courage as a peculiar virtue of Athenian democracy.[8] His interpretation of Athenian courage nicely balances its connections to two apparently divergent factors: on the one hand, the significance of practical reasoning, deliberation, and free speech as elements that inform the application of courage in specific acts; on the other, the role of emotions such as fear and shame in shaping courage as a motivation. He argues that, in tandem with other values, the Athenians democratized an earlier heroic and 'hoplite' value of courage as something that pertained to all citizens; and while he contends that this distinctive Athenian democratic courage might be of value for today, he does not gloss over the link between Athenian courage and the will to dominate others, which is apparently less palatable to modern liberals. As with all works which try to make a case for classical Athenian distinctiveness and peculiarity in relation to the rest of the Greek world and to earlier periods, the volume rests on the traditional assumption of an Athenian democratic breakthrough in relation to archaic and 'traditional' Greek values. Elements of this assumption are undoubtedly true, but more methodological reflection on how to deal with the evidentiary problems, given the heavily Athenocentric nature of our sources, will certainly be required in future work.

[7] *Fear and Loathing in Ancient Athens. Religion and Politics during the Peloponnesian War*. By Alexander Rubel. Durham, Acumen, 2014. Pp. x + 316. Hardback, £75 ISBN: 978-1-84465-570-0.

[8] *Courage in the Democratic Polis. Ideology and Critique in Classical Athens*. By Ryan K. Balot. New York, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xvi + 408. Hardback £41.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-998215-8.

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It used to be the case that scholars tended to approach Athenian democracy from an evolutionary approach, normally distinguishing between the golden age of fifth-century democracy and a fourth century distinguished by crisis and corruption. In the last few decades, the work of Hansen and Ober has favoured a tendency towards synchronic accounts focused largely on fourth-century sources. Luca Asmonti's new sourcebook on Athenian democracy changes direction, by eschewing a synchronic and thematic account in favour of a chronological one.[9] This is a stimulating choice, and the selection of sources is interesting, but the volume suffers from a number of major problems. It lacks either a detailed introduction or an accompanying commentary, making the interpretation of the sources and their context quite hard for the uninitiated. Equally, its focus is on the traditional constitutional and institutional history, largely leaving aside the wider aspects of Athenian politics that have been illuminated in the research of the last twenty years. Most bizarrely for a chronologically based account, it devotes just sixteen pages to the fourth century. The lack of a fourth-century narrative in Aristotle's *Constitution of the Athenians* seems still to determine our own narratives of Athenian democracy – for how long?

Emma Bridges devotes a stimulating work to the image of Xerxes in ancient culture from the fifth century BC to the early Roman Empire.[10] She combines a reception of Xerxes across antiquity with a discussion of the interaction between Persian, Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures, and the role of the Persian Empire in the cultural and literary repertoires of these ancient societies. A significant part of the book is devoted to the two major representations of Xerxes in Aeschylus and Herodotus; the image of Xerxes is linked to a range of themes, such as hubris, tyranny, excess, luxury, and the change of fortune. Building on the major impact of Aeschylus' and Herodotus' accounts, Bridges explores how Xerxes is represented in the Greek rhetorical and historiographical texts of the fourth century, as well as in the Greek texts of the Second Sophistic and the Latin literature of the early Empire. Particularly commendable is her effort to complement the Greek tradition on Xerxes with the traditions reflected in Achaemenid inscriptions and monuments and the Jewish literary tradition of Esther and Josephus.

The final four volumes in this review are devoted to military history. Josho Brouwers has produced an impressive synthesis of early Greek warfare addressed primarily to an audience of amateurs and undergraduate students, but of major appeal to specialists as well.[11] On the whole, he does not present a novel account, and he does not explicitly discuss scholarly approaches and polemics (though he provides a detailed commented bibliography); but he does a great job of using the primary evidence in order to tell a compelling story, which is lavishly illustrated not only with images of objects, sites, and maps but also with creative reconstructions which provide high visual stimulation. The book commences with Mycenaean warfare, moves to the archaeological evidence

[9] *Athenian Democracy. A Sourcebook*. By Luca Asmonti. Bloomsbury Sources in Ancient History. London and New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. xiv + 246. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-8264-2034-3; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-4411-1371-9.

[10] *Imagining Xerxes. Ancient Perspectives on a Persian King*. By Emma Bridges. Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception. London and New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. xii + 233. 8 illustrations, 2 halftones. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-4725-1427-1.

[11] *Henchmen of Ares. Warriors and Warfare in Early Greece*. By Josho Brouwers. Rotterdam, Karwansaray Publishers, 2013. Pp. v + 203. Over 100 colour illustrations. Hardback £25, ISBN: 978-94-90258-07-8.

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for Dark Age fighting, examines the descriptions of the Homeric epics, and finally discusses the developments of the archaic period up to the Persian Wars. The account is holistic, paying attention to armour and tactics, fortifications, land and naval warfare, militias and mercenaries, social structures, and ideals. Of particular note is the author's attempt to stress the Mediterranean and Near Eastern context of the development of Greek warfare: the graphic reconstructions of such encounters are, in my view, the most thought-provoking illustrations of the volume.

Two books are part of the Pen & Sword series of military history. Stephen English's latest work focuses on mercenaries in archaic and classical Greece.[12] The book discusses mercenary pay and then follows a chronological structure, covering the archaic period, the fifth century, the campaign of the Ten Thousand, the early fourth century, and the campaigns of Philip and Alexander; a final chapter is devoted to the employment of mercenaries by the big powers of the western Mediterranean, Syracuse and Carthage. The book discusses most of the relevant evidence in chronological order, but it does not add much to our existing knowledge (and is not fully up to date bibliographically, missing, for example, Lee's important book on the Ten Thousand). Part of the problem is that the author tends to discuss in detail individual campaigns in which mercenaries participated, and much of the discussion of these campaigns has little to do with mercenaries. There is a lot of description but rather limited analysis of the aspects of the mercenary phenomenon as such (e.g. of the structural role of employers such as the Persian Empire, the motives of the mercenaries, the exchange of military and other forms of knowledge through mercenary service). *Ancient Campaigns in which Mercenaries Participated* is probably a better title for this work.

Mike Roberts and Bob Bennett have written a book devoted to the latter half of the third century BC.[13] The account starts with the rise of Aratus and the Achaean League in the 240s and finishes with the battle of Panium in 200 BC. In between, it discusses the conflicts, alliances, and interests that fed into the Cleomenean War; beyond that, the narrative is largely shaped by the careers and campaigns of the two great kings of the late third century, Philip V of Macedon and Antiochus the Great. In the process, the authors cover campaigns in mainland Greece, the Balkans, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Persia. The narrative is understandably based mainly on Polybius, but ably supplemented by the other existing sources; while Polybius' account is held together by the theme of the rise of Rome into a Mediterranean-wide power, the authors have chosen to leave Rome largely aside. This is a gripping and very enjoyable narrative, amply supported by maps, plans, and images, which incorporates military history into the wider political and social developments of the period. It deserves to be read extensively.

Finally, William Shepherd has contributed a volume on the campaign of Pylos and Sphacteria in 425 BC to the well-known Osprey series on military campaigns.[14] The

[12] *Mercenaries in the Classical World to the Death of Alexander*. By Stephen English. Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2012. Pp. xviii + 212. 1 map. Hardback, £19.99, ISBN: 978-1-84884-330-1.

[13] *Twilight of the Hellenistic World*. By Mike Roberts and Bob Bennett. Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2012. Pp. xx + 187. 5 maps, 12 plans, 20 images. Hardback £19.99, ISBN: 978-1-84884-136-9.

[14] *Pylos and Sphacteria 425 BC. Sparta's Island of Disaster*. By William Shepherd. Oxford and New York, Osprey Publishing, 2013. Pp. 96. 7 maps, 74 images. Paperback £14.99, ISBN: 978-1-78200-271-0.

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book provides a useful introduction to Pylos by detailing the military-political developments in the Pentekontaetia and the early stages of the Peloponnesian War. It presents short biographies of the opposing commanders, and gives a useful description of the forces of light and heavy infantry and navy employed by the combatants, as well as of the different strategic plans of Athens and Sparta. The bulk of the volume is occupied by a detailed description of the naval engagement, the blockade, and the final capitulation of the Spartan forces. Shepherd concludes by tracing the consequences of the battle and by providing a short description of the battlefield today. As with other volumes in the Osprey series, the book is lavishly illustrated with images of ancient warfare, photographs of the battlefield, maps and plans, and some very stimulating graphic reconstructions of the battles; it undoubtedly makes study of this campaign a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

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Roman History

Let's start at the very beginning: that is, at the beginning of the history of Rome. This latest volume of the Oxford Readings in Classical Studies[1] makes a clear case for the virtue of reprinting old articles even in an age of supposedly wide digital availability. An obvious virtue here is the fact this collection includes no fewer than seven articles that have been translated into English for the first time. In making this collection, the editors hope to show the continuing lively debate on the nature of the ancient historiographical tradition. Rather than taking a particular editorial line, the collection includes scholars with differing views as to the reliability of this tradition when it comes to early Roman history. That being said, it is not surprising that scholarship that aims wholeheartedly to uphold the historicity of the traditional accounts is definitely outnumbered by studies demonstrating instead the construction of historiographical tradition(s). Nonetheless, Andrea Carandini begins the collection by arguing once more for the congruence of the archaeological evidence and the literary tradition. The articles that follow vary somewhat in approach and in degrees of scepticism – for instance, Fausto Zevi admits a historical core to stories about Demoratus and the Tarquins, whereas Michael Crawford is forthright in his rejection of historicity in the earliest list of Roman colonies. The editors have taken the helpful decision to focus rather more on 'stories' than individual authors and this certainly helps shape a thought-provoking collection that can be read with profit rather than just put on the shelf for future reference. In particular, the editors' suggestion that this volume could profitably be given to students in place of a single 'authoritative' version of the history of early Rome, so that they can see that there are indeed different ways of

[1] *The Roman Historical Tradition. Regal and Republican Rome*. Edited by James H. Richardson and Federico Santangelo. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 372. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-965784-1; paperback £40, ISBN: 978-0-19-965785-8.

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