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Rüdiger Kinsky (ed.), *Diorthoseis*. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Hellenismus und zum Nachleben Alexanders des Grossen. *BzA*, 183 (Book Review)

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Rüdiger Kinsky (ed.), *Diorthoseis. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Hellenismus und zum Nachleben Alexanders des Grossen. BzA, 183. München/Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2004. Pp. 252. ISBN 3-598-77735-3. €58.00.*

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[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

This volume presents five elaborations on lectures given at a seminar for Gerhard Wirth's 75th birthday (December, 2001). Kinsky explains in his terse introduction that the papers are dedicated to revising standard views of Alexander's reception and the history of Hellenism. In this spirit, the title "Diorthoseis" refers to a continuous process of reconstructing ancient history and periodically revising these reconstructions by reassessing all evidence. The breadth of this description fits the essays, but whatever is lost in focus is made up for in clearly formulated issues and engaging syntheses.

In the first piece Michael Zahrnt argues that by 324 Alexander had lost respect for Greece mainly because he no longer perceived a threat from anti-Macedonian partisans. He sees Alexander's decree, promulgated in 324 to allow exiles to return to their home cities, as a sign that he would apply the same tactic to Greece that he had been using in his eastern satrapies: create political divisions and conquer. This discussion is focused on Athens' dealings in Samos as illustrated by an inscription from Tegea.¹ It has been interpreted to show that Athens had taken the island from its Persian satrap in 366, driving out the Samian inhabitants, keeping the island as a private possession and not part of the league, and settling as many as 12,000 Athenian cleruchs there. The return of Samian exiles after 40 years would have displaced these cleruchs back to Athens where both economic loss and civil tensions were sure to ensue. To forestall this process the Athenians as well as other Greek cities in similar straits, were forced to seek some means besides armed revolt to influence Alexander. Since their only experience of external "tyrants" dominating them involved Greek gods, it was natural for them to relate Alexander to a divinity, and thus to send a delegation to Babylon in 323 to confer divine honors on the great king. Though Zahrnt uses Tarn as somewhat of a straw man in this argument, he refers the reader to

a forthcoming monograph that will expand his argument and treat the recent literature in depth.²

Gerhard Wirth follows with a revisionist reading of the funeral speech for Hyperides in which he argues that the speech marks the end of Greek illusions about independence from the Macedonians.³ Though this argument may not seem germane to a book on Alexander's *Nachleben*, in many ways it comments on an interesting facet of Alexander's (and Philip's) reception in the modern world (as often seen in editions of Attic orators): both serve as models of autocrats rightly opposed. Wirth builds his case that by 323 most Athenians, and Greeks in general for that matter, viewed the opposition of heroes like Leosthenes, Hyperides and all those who died in the revolution against Macedonian hegemony as a romantic gesture. He does this in two ways. First, he starts by building a historical, and especially economic, context demonstrating the hopelessness facing opponents of Macedon. Then his close reading of the speech focuses, on the one hand, on the emptiness of the praises, especially in the context of the traditional devices of Attic funeral speeches, and on the other, on the lack of reference to future political action against Macedonian oppressors, for instance, Antipater, the murderer of Hyperides. Whether or not one goes in for this type of argument, Wirth makes his case clearly and powerfully, and leaves his reader with a compelling, almost poetic, sense of what the audience of 323 may have felt upon listening to the speech.

Vasile Lica contributes a fascinating paper on the reception of Alexander in Romania in which the course of Alexander as *exemplum* flows from Byzantine source through a brief Renaissance humanist turn, early modern conflict with the Ottomans and Hapsburgs, rising nationalism and on into relative silence in the Soviet period. Though Lica underscores that the Alexander myth can mean almost anything to anyone, his discussion climaxes with the Romanian version of the Alexander romance, the *Alexandria*, and its role in nation-building. Oral and rhapsodic versions were enormously popular thanks to Romanians' identification with the Macedonian conquest of eastern foes, the Scythians and Persians, whom they related to the Tartars and Ottoman Turks. The written version of the romance was created when the Hapsburgs formed the Union of the Romanian Orthodox Church with Rome, at which time a politically correct version was required to reorient the masses westward. By the late 19th century, nationalist historians were holding up the Alexander of this romance as essential to national myth-making. The canonical, written version made this obvious by showing that, as the Trojans fled their home to found Rome in Italy, so the Romans fled to Dacia to found Romania. Thus, unlike any other national context I know of, the Alexander romance was central to Romanian nation building.

Guido Schepens contributes a study of ancient Greek (and to some degree modern western) historiography, looking at one specific Hellenistic example. Pallotino had

once compared the naval victory of the Massiliotes over the Carthaginians in 490 at Artemesion (so the fragment tells it) to the defeat of Persia by the Greeks at Marathon, for which comparison he treated the information contained in the Sosylos fragment as factual.⁴ Based on a close reading of the fragment and a review of its interpretations, Schepens dates it to the early second century BC and argues that the fragment's depiction of a legendary Massiliote victory represents one in many layers of historical judgments on the western Greeks' place in the world. In this way the Sosylos fragment presents more of a historical problem than fact. In particular, the fragment may reveal a strand of contemporary Hannibalic propaganda, and thus anti-Roman historiography, published after the Battle of Zama in the second century, using a legendary fifth century event to discuss the position of Carthaginians and Greeks facing Roman hegemony. The paper usefully points to the need for historiographical sophistication and constant revision in Hellenistic historical studies.

The last selection, Gerhard Dobesch's treatment of Julius Caesar and Hellenism, extends to a length worthy of this important and complex topic (nearly 150 pages). In monographic fashion he begins with a review of issues in the current literature, proceeds to a treatment of the Roman reception of Hellenism from the early 3rd century to the end of the Republic, and then on to Caesar's personal relations with Hellenism, Caesar's view of the extant Hellenistic kingdoms' part in world politics, and Caesar's use of Hellenism in Roman cultural politics (including the integration of Hellenistic monarchy into Rome). This mostly intellectual history of cultural interaction between a growing Romanism and a fluctuating Hellenism lays the foundation for an analysis of Caesar's debt to Alexander's cultural world. Caesar's newly monarchical empire allows him to become a model of Hellenism and renew a tradition that was waning with the extinction of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

The first two essays on Alexander's strategy and reception in 324/3 succeed as highly readable condensations of work these authors have elaborated, or will elaborate, elsewhere. Both are accessible, attractive and challenging and would serve well for courses in Hellenistic history or the Attic orators (language presents an obvious barrier here in America.⁵ The third essay on Alexander in Romania should be read by anyone interested in the growing field of Classical Tradition in eastern Europe.⁶ The fourth essay on the Sosylos fragment seems to me more directed at specialists interested in the historiography of the 2nd century, though its methodological ruminations are thoughtful and widely applicable. And the last essay on Caesar's Hellenism could serve well as a provocative introduction to Roman Republican intellectual history. All are more likely to prove useful to graduate students and University teachers than to undergraduates, but historians outside of the classical world and the (intellectually motivated) German-reading public should find much that is accessible and attractive in them.

Contents

Gerhard Wirth, "Der Epitaphios des Hypereides und das Ende einer Illusion."

Michael Zahrnt, "Ist Samos 'eine Messe wert'?"

Vasile Lica, "Alexander der Grosse in Rumänien."

Guido Schepens, "Die Westgriechen in antiker und moderner Universalgeschichte."

Gerhard Dobesch, "Caesar und der Hellenismus."

Notes:

1. K. Hallof and C. Habicht, "Bouleuten und Beamte der athenischen Kleruchie in Samos," in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung* 110 (1995) 273-304. Zahrnt uses IG XII 6.1 to demonstrate the disruption of returning exiles in Samos.

2. *Versöhnen oder Spalten? Überlegungen zu Alexanders Verbanntendekret.*

3. Wirth lists publications in which he dealt with this essay's issues in more depth. Most recent and pertinent is *Hypereides, Lykurg und die ἀπονομήα der Athener. Ein Versuch zum Verständnis einiger Reden der Alexanderzeit*, Vienna, 1999.

4. F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* IIB, Nr. 176 F1.

5. Another note on language: Wirth's essay is influenced enough by Isocratean style to be difficult in places, e.g., the 110 word period on p. 28

6. The field has blossomed in this time of an eastward spreading EU. See, for example, the [Centre of Studies in the Classical Tradition for East-Central Europe](#).