In conclusion, this volume offers a welcome collection of views on comparisons between Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdom. The ten essays of the volume provide much material on the royal policies of the two kingdoms and the network of communications and interactions that were laid down in the Hellenistic East between the central administration and the inhabitants of the kingdoms, both Greek and non-Greek. Various factors contributed to the creation of a dynamic network that determined and shaped the level of integration and communication within the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms. These factors included rivalry between monarchs, different royal policies and strategies, various types of cities and settlements, variation in local traditions and a range of attitudes and feelings on the part of the indigenous population towards Hellenistic rulers and towards immigrants who settled in newly conquered territories. The fact that most of the essays are co-authored makes for a clearer and more vivid evaluation on comparative projects. All ten contributions offer numerous insights that will certainly be a great aid to further research.

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ROMAN

Lucia Athanassaki and Frances B. Titchener (eds) *Plutarch's cities*. pp. xx + 378. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. ISBN: 978-0-19- 285991-4, hardcover $ 135.

This book, a collective volume, is the fruit of a revisited conference held in Delphi in 2013 in honour of Anastasios Nikolaidis, Emeritus Professor of Classics at the University of Crete, who has taken a particular interest in Plutarch throughout his career. This book has all the qualities needed for use by amateurs and specialists alike: a common bibliography for all the articles and two detailed *indices*: "*index locorum*" on the one hand, "names and subjects" on the other. It brings together an international panel of excellent specialists, most of whom focus mostly on classical Greek philology and literature, with the exception of the historian Katerina Panagopoulou.

The two editors clearly set out the aim and tone of the book in their introduction. The volume opens with a statement that is essential to the general questioning: "Greek cities still matter in the first century CE" (p. 1). For a historian, this is an obvious remark, but dealing with it from the point of view of the 1st c. AD moralist posed quite a challenge, as this particular theme was not the subject of a treatise or a dialogue as such, even if some texts come close to it. This explains why, until now, only two cities, Athens and Rome, had been studied through the author's lens (by J.L. Johnson in 1972 and J. Scheid in 2012). The volume therefore fills a gap in a welcome manner and provides an original angle of attack that is a breath of fresh air compared with traditional studies on Plutarch, which are not always sensitive to the context in which the Chaeronean wrote and thought. The aim here is to examine the Plutarchean city from three different angles, each of which forms a separate part: the city as a physical entity contemporary with the author, as "a lived experience and a source of inspiration"; the city of the past in its historical and socio-political dimension; and the city as a theoretical construct, one that enables the reader to think. Several fields are covered, from archaeology and topography to ideology and philosophy, not forgetting of course history, both past and present. In addition to the introduction and conclusion, the book contains seventeen chapters, harmoniously divided between the three parts.

This common thread of the cities was by no means obvious, however, given the particularly scattered nature of the information provided by Plutarch. The authors are thus compelled to seek their material from both the *Lives* and the *Moralia*, which often takes the form of occasional, even enigmatic remarks. As a result, some of the articles are more compilatory than analytical, although this does not detract from their usefulness. This is particularly true of the first part, where one reads five contributions on Chaeronea (Ewen Bowie, chap. 1), Delphi (Philip Stadter, chap. 2), Rome (Paolo Desideri, chap. 3), sanctuaries (Joseph Geiger, chap. 4) and Athens (Lucia Athanassaki, chap. 5): all of these constitute 'civic vignettes' on places already largely dealt with in other works by archaeologists and historians. The Athenian chapter stands out, however, for its more specific perspective, since it is based on a specific discourse, the *De gloria Atheniensium*: in this strange opus, Plutarch takes his place on the Agora near the temple of Ares and describes, with great erudition, a number of monuments, buildings, statues or paintings, such as that of Euphranor for the battle of Mantinea in the *stoa of Zeus Eleutherios*: this allows him to survey the glorious military deeds of the past through an architectural tour that ignores material traces dating from after the Classical period.

This is followed by the second part, devoted to reconstructions of the history and social and political life of certain cities: Athens, Sparta, Thebes, several northern *poleis* and, finally, Troy. The analyses of Plutarch's historical sources and methods are particularly welcome, especially in relation to the three great rivals of the 5th and 4th c. BC. Christopher Pelling's contribution (chap. 6) shows, with great clarity and skill, what, in terms of stereotypes, Plutarch's Athens owes to Thucydides (a point already known and explored, however), while the Sparta towards which the Chaeronean tends is primarily the expression of his own opinion, on top of what can be found in Herodotus (a little) or Xenophon (slightly more). In addition to the *Life of Lycurgus* and Plutarch's interest in education, particularly military education, there is the historian's treasure trove of the *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes*, a substantial part of which goes back to Phylarchos, which should have been explored more thoroughly: it is not so often that Plutarch deals with Hellenistic history!

The next three chapters (7: Athena Kavoulaki; 8: Timothy E. Duff; 9: Delfim Leão) all focus on Athens between the last quarter of the 5th century BC and the beginning of the Hellenistic period. Kavoulaki insists on the dimension of interrelation between the individual and the *polis* as it emerges from the *Lives*, basing herself above all on that of Alcibiades. She rightly uses the 'linguistic' model suggested by specialists in urban life, in which monuments and places constitute the elements of the lexicon, while social life forms the syntagmatic framework. She thus deciphers the sacred spaces of Athens at the end of the 5th c. and, in particular, the Eleusinian *pompē* as restored and led by Alcibiades in 407, who then fully showed his performative capacities and his promotion of rediscovered political unity. Duff, in a contribution that undoubtedly strays slightly from the general purpose of the volume to focus on a specific character, in turn examines the case of Alcibiades (§4-8 of his *Life*). Through a series of anecdotes, he takes the reader on a tour of several Athenian houses where Alcibiades distinguished himself by his *hybris* and *tryphē*: this portrait of Alcibiades is also, in its own way, a portrait of the Athenians themselves and the ambivalent relationship they have with him, between passion and fear of tyranny. To complete this Athenian journey, Leão takes the case, at the dawn of the Hellenistic period, of the *Life of Phocion* and the trial the character endured. The assembly that meets in the theatre (that of Dionysus after its Lycurgan renovation) would have deserved further comment for its profoundly atypical character (p. 176), particularly the presence of slaves, foreigners and *atimoi*). Furthermore, the historical treatment is not very convincing and reveals a partially obsolete historiography on "the progressive alienation of the common citizen from the notion of the state". The French epigraphic school has amply demonstrated that this was not the case, particularly in the early Hellenistic period, at least since the work of Louis Robert. One goes back to Boeotia with John Marincola's comprehensive presentation of Thebes (chap. 10), which highlights the difficulties Plutarch faces with this Boeotian city: after having been on the side of the Persians, the Thebans were the great enemies of the Athenians in the latter part of the 5th century BC. Only the period of Theban hegemony in the 4th century stands out in his eyes, thanks to Epaminondas and Pelopidas, before the final surge against the Macedonians that ended with the city razed to the ground by Alexander in 335.

Chapter 11, by Katerina Panagopoulou, is a welcome expansion and, above all, a meticulous and very useful synthesis in historical terms of cities less usually dealt with through Plutarch by historians: those of Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Western and Central Greece, Illyria and Epirus. The task of analysing Plutarch's texts was even more difficult here than for other regions, as the allusions are so sporadic and scattered. It appears that Plutarch leaves out certain *poleis* that were closely linked to

Antigonid power, no doubt out of a shared disgust with his readers at their loss of independence to Macedonia. The last contribution in the second part, written by Judith Mossman (chap. 12), deals with a particularly original theme treated with great subtlety in its multiple semantic layers: the town of Troy, through a journey in which Homer and his reception serve as a common thread. This journey begins with the ancient debates over its location, which are of little interest to Plutarch, continues with the report on Alexander's visit to Troy and ends with the imaginary Troy depicted in the painting seen in Elea by Portia, Cato's daughter, and the effect it had on her emotions.

The third and final part of the volume opens with a more abstract reflection on Plutarch's conception of the *polis*, including his ideal city, which immediately reminds us of the classical philosophers, especially Plato. Alexei Zadorojnyi (chap. 13) shows the extent to which Plutarch is concerned with ethics as an intrinsic factor of politics and sets up a powerful analogy between the city and the *psychē*, analysed here in the mirror of Plato's *Republic* without immersion in the context of the Roman Empire. In the series of metaphors applied to the city, that of the ship is explored systematically and scrupulously by Aurelio Pérez Jiménez (chap. 14): admittedly, this is not a new image, since it has been used by poets and philosophers since Homer. It is not just the city as a whole that forms the ship, but also its various components, and Plutarch spins the metaphor through all the complexity of the nautical elements, including piloting and threatening storms, all wrapped up in the author's own "baroque aesthetic". Going against the established idea that the sole city is central to Plutarch's political thought, Geert Roskam (chap. 15) shows, in a clear and implacable argument, that the author's relationship with the *polis* is far more sophisticated: Plutarch is certainly a Platonic philosopher, but, in the tension that arises between reality and the ideal, he is remarkably pragmatic in the way he conceives political commitment, which can take place not only at the civic level, but also at a higher level, which includes the *imperium Romanum*. However, according to Roskam, to accept this observation, it is necessary to read beyond the two usual treatises on the subject, *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* and *An seni respublica gerenda sit*. The next chapter (chap. 16), by Luc Van der Stockt's, takes the analysis a step further, since the author sees in the ideal Plutarchean city, so full of religion, a kind of prefiguration of St Augustine's *Ciuitas Dei*, which the city of Rome would embody. Plutarch is definitely a Platonic philosopher, for whom Tychē plays an essential role in human affairs, but should we see it as a 'divine Providence'? And should the ideal city be placed in heaven rather than on earth? Ancient philosophical trends and schools are certainly enough to explain Plutarch's position, and it seems that an important bias transpires in this article, which ends with the following sentence: "it is to that heavenly origin that we will return; and there we will live the blessed life of the righteous". As Tim Whitmarsh rightly points out (chap. 16), when it comes to religion, Plutarch's primary aim in his intriguing treatise *On Superstition*, which tackles the Epicurean critique of religion as superstition, is to refute the non-providential view proposed by Epicureanism. It has to be said that these last two chapters (16 and 17) tend to take the reader away from the general theme of the book.

On the whole, this collective work stands out for the richness and diversity of the perspectives it opens up, through the general theme of the *polis* which forms its backbone. It allows us to move on from the traditional study of "great men" to that of "great cities" (Athanassaki p. 313), and will be a landmark in the field of Classics for this welcome change of perspective. Plutarch's work, which appears here as a vast corpus from which the authors have drawn material that has sometimes been neglected, forms a challenge in itself, both because of the polygraph's eclecticism and the particularly complex nature of the reconstruction of sources: it will be remembered that the Chaeronean, however dependent on classical authors he may appear to be, often also relies on autopsy and the personal emotions that his literary travels provide him with. In this sense, we must pay attention, as Roskam suggests, to the pragmatism of a writer who, Platonist though he is, is obviously sensitive to the world around him and, therefore, to the supra-civic dimensions perceptible in his abundant work. One may regret, though, that beyond the question of representations and symbolic aspects, real cities are less systematically addressed in their historical dimension. Contexts and chronologies are sometimes neglected, and certain views, on the Hellenistic period for example, could do with updating. The work as a whole also remains a little too "Athenocentered" and focused on the Classical period, which is obviously due to Plutarch's own interests. Perhaps from now on we should look to Plutarch, as Panagopoulou does with the cities of the North and the West, for what we do not expect to find in it, even if this requires extensive reading.

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