

Book Reviews

The Cambridge Ancient History VII², 1. The Hellenistic World, Cambridge 1984, ed. by F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen and R.M. Ogilvie (614pp.+ 8 maps).

The second edition of the CAH VII has been eagerly awaited for many years. A great deal of material has been added since Vol. VII first appeared in 1928, and as a result our knowledge of the period is now much better. The years 323–217 BCE are treated in this volume, while the second century BCE including Roman affairs will be discussed in Vol. VII, 2. The third century BCE dealt with in this volume is a particularly interesting period as concerns the Eastern Mediterranean. After the death of Alexander the Great, there emerged the Hellenistic monarchies of the Diadochi, in which the Greek conquerors found themselves in a completely new world. In the 3rd century BCE Greek culture underwent far-reaching changes as a result of greatly increased contact between East and West. Vol. VII, 1 surveys many aspects of the Hellenistic period, but mainly from the point of view of the conquerors, the Greeks.

In chapter 1 F.W. Walbank gives us a very good, comprehensive survey of the sources for the period. Although such a volume does not allow for too much detail, perhaps more elaboration of certain issues would have been useful, for instance the problem of the sources of Diodorus Siculus, in particular Hieronymus of Cardia and Hecataeus of Abdera, who are pertinent to the third century. Also some of the Eastern sources for the third century BCE, e.g. some later biblical books, might have been mentioned to aid the general reader. This is not an unimportant point, and I shall return to it.

Walbank explicitly says that “It was not feasible to include a full critical account of the art, literature and philosophical speculations of the period” (XII) and refers the reader to the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, Robertson’s *History of Greek Art*, etc. Nevertheless, I still think a short survey of the literature and art of the period, within the historical context, should have been included in this volume. Unfortunately, very little attention is given to the literature of the time by any of the authors. For instance, D. Musti’s chapter on “Syria and the East” (chap. 6) gives the somewhat misleading impression that the Hellenistic period in the region was merely a matter of

politics and economic affairs; he does not hint at what Hellenism meant in the East at the time. Also J.K. Davies, who is the author of a chapter on the cultural, social and economic features of the Hellenistic World (chap. 8), does not examine the cultural aspects in any depth. Personally I would have preferred a good survey of the cultural issues over a long methodological survey; many of Davies' methodological observations are applicable to any other period of antiquity.

Some chapters in this volume do not do justice to the peoples of the East, who have much to offer in many respects. True, E. Turner draws our attention to this problem when he refers to the demotic texts, but neither he, nor Musti or Davies really discuss Eastern cultures. Even where a discussion of the meaning of Hellenism might have been expected — and Turner's analogy between Hellenism and counterpoint is not very clear to the general reader — it is absent. Walbank's excellent chapter on "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" (chap. 3) concentrates on the Greek side of this issue. Some elaboration of the "Eastern" side of the matter might have done greater justice to the topic (Walbank points to the "peri basileias" literature of Palestine and Egypt in the selected bibliography). Turner makes some enlightening observations on Ptolemaic Egypt, but does not discuss many of the Greek sources which reveal the force exerted by rigorous Hellenism in Egypt of the third century, for example Hecataeus of Abdera's *Aegyptiaka*. Walbank is right when he says that most of Diodorus Siculus I reflects Hecataeus, but neither he nor Turner elaborates on the significance of this important finding. It would have been enlightening to hear both these scholars' views on the matter (because Spoerri's dating should be refuted once and for all). One can always, of course, turn to Fraser's *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, but again a discussion would have been useful within the historical context. Neither Berossus nor the Hellenist behind Philo of Byblos are even mentioned by Musti (chap. 6), and many other third century BCE sources, e.g. from Palestine, are absent from his discussion.

One can assume that the limits imposed by the editors upon the contributors to this volume, as well as the fact that we are awaiting the second volume of the *Cambridge History of Judaism*, deterred them from including a more extensive chapter in volume VII, 1 on the Jews as well as on other peoples of the East. Samaritans, Arabs, Edomites, etc. had already encountered Hellenism by the third century BCE and should have received at least some attention within the general historical context. The artificial division between Jewish and general history, still found in so many surveys of the Hellenistic period, should finally be laid to rest.

The Jewish sources of the Hellenistic era certainly contain a great deal of useful information for the general historian. To give only one example: in the description of the special clothing and symbols of royalty of the Hellenistic king, Walbank lists the outward signs of kingship (p. 67); an additional source, where these are described in an "Eastern" context, is found in a Jewish document, the *Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*

(preserved in Greek) of the second century BCE, *Test. Judah*. 15:2–3: "...For even someone who is king, if he is promiscuous, is divested of his kingship, since he has been enslaved by sexual impulses, just as I experienced. For I gave my staff (that is, the stability of my tribe), my girdle (that is, my power), and my crown (that is, the glory of my kingdom)." Also of interest for the study of Hellenism are the Hellenistic Jews and Samaritans of the different diasporas, who are not given a proper place in the relevant chapters. Davies' remark on p. 263 is basically true; he says that "Most historiography, ancient and modern, has accordingly concentrated on the Greek component in the interaction of cultural influences in the period and area. That attitude is made all the easier since non-Greek literary productions — demotic Egyptian texts and inscriptions, Phoenician inscriptions, neo-Babylonian cuneiform texts, Hebrew and Aramaic texts outside the Bible such as the Talmud and the Mishna — are much less accessible than the Greek." If so, why were these sources not investigated more thoroughly for this volume? (In fact the Mishna and Talmud are not really sources for the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, and there are many other sources in the *Pseudepigrapha* and *Apocrypha* which Davies fails to mention).

The chapters on science (Lloyd), siegecraft (Garlan), agriculture (Thompson) and building (Winter) are very useful for the general historian. Those on politics and international relations both in Greece and elsewhere (Walbank and Will), as well as Heinen's chapter (11) on the "Syrian-Egyptian Wars and the New Kingdoms of Asia Minor" are up-to date and excellent.

The editors who have completed this volume, namely F.W. Walbank and A.E. Astin, should be congratulated for their joint effort; it is a major contribution to the understanding of the Hellenistic period, from the point of view represented in this volume.

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Doron Mendels

Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987, pp. X+ 181.

In the concluding sentence of the Epilogue to this excellent study, Mendels notes that in contradistinction to the meager references in diaspora literature to the Land of Israel during the Hasmonean period, "when this state disappears as a sovereign Jewish entity, the literature from the diaspora shows a tremendous interest in the lost land" (p. 129). The irony of such a development is self-evident, and this reviewer has indeed pointed to a similar heightened awareness of 'the Land' emerging from subsequent