
Timothy Howe – E. Edward Gavrin – Graham Wrightson (eds.): *Greece, Macedon and Persia. Studies in Social, Political and Military History in Honor of Waldemar Heckel*. Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2015, 214 pp. [ISBN: 978-17-829792-3-4].

Waldemar Heckel is, without any trace of doubt, one of the most influential experts in the world about Ancient Macedonia. Even during my time as an undergraduate, some of his books were always close to me because of how fundamental they are to better understand my current field of expertise, the Successors. In fact, it would be fair to say that his works have reached great fame among the Academics and undergrad students all around the world. It should not come as a surprise, then, that such a prestigious reunion of Academics has decided to prepare this work in his honour.

The book consists of a collection of papers, each dealing with an aspect related in one way or the other with either Greece, Macedonia or Persia.

Nevertheless, Ancient Macedonia is the main protagonist. Most chapters deal with either Macedonia itself in one point or the other of its extensive history, from before Philip and Alexander till Roman times, with only a small amount dealing with Ancient Persia or Greece.

Furthermore, the only chapter focusing on Ancient Persia, by Sabine Müller, deals with Alexander's conquest in a certain way. Despite Darius I being the subject of study, it is clear that his experience, narrated in said chapter, can be applied to Alexander and his military operations against the different pretenders that tried to quickly seize power and grab the throne once Darius III had been murdered.

This chapter, I may add, maybe one of the most interesting ones in the book. Usually the Hellenistic world has been studied as its own separate part of the Middle Eastern history, but for some time now the Academia has started to acknowledge the fact that some ideas of previous kingdoms and states survived well into the Hellenistic era and this chapter is a clear example of a Greek king having to adapt and deal with a problem similar to what a previous, native king may have had to deal with. It is nevertheless a pity that it focuses on the case of Alexander (and, of course, of Darius I and other Persian kings), when similar examples can be found from Seleucid times.

However, the topics, even if they mostly deal with Macedonian affairs, are quite varied when it comes to the aspects of Macedonian history they deal with. Some deal with not so common subject, such as historiography (chapters 3, 10, 13 and 19), religion (chapter 16), gender (chapter 4) and some others deal with more commonly talked about themes such as political events or military concerns and campaigns.

These are, in my humble opinion, the weakest among the many that conform the book. Military history has always been featured often in Ancient History journals and books, undoubtedly because the Roman Legions and the Macedonian phalanx has always been able to captivate the minds of the young and the not so young. Political events and history also used to occupy a dominating role in the very same works, and the same topics have been talked and discussed about for centuries now.

This doesn't mean that the chapter dealing with the Argead infantry (chapter 5) isn't worth a read, but I'd say that there are more interesting chapters within the same book, especially those aforementioned ones that deal with more uncommon themes, such as Macedonian religion or women and the role they played in politics.

The fact that most of the chapters are dedicated in one way or another to Macedonia should not come off as a surprise. Heckel is mainly an Ancient Macedonia scholar, and thus, in this book written in his honour, this land is featured predominantly.

All in all, this is a well recommended book. I found most chapters interesting, even if I have my own preferences and I would recommend some of them more than the others. The selection of scholars that collaborated to bring this book to the public could hardly been better, because most of them are leading scholars in the field of Ancient Macedonian and Hellenistic History.

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