Angelos Chaniotis, *Age of Conquests: The Greek World from Alexander to Hadrian*. Harvard: Harvard University Press 2018. Pp. 460. ISBN 978-06-74-65964-3 (hardback)

This book, the second in Harvard's 'History of the Ancient World' series, introduces us to the history of the 'long Hellenistic age', from Alexander to Hadrian. This is a subject on which Chaniotis is an expert: his 2008 book *War in the Hellenistic World* is probably the most widely accessible of his recent publications on Hellenistic history. In many ways, *Age of Conquests* offers a distillation of Chaniotis' thinking on the major themes and historical developments of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Echoes of his earlier research on Greek religion and ruler cult, in particular, are detectable throughout. The text and argument are remarkably clear and lucid with deep scholarship balanced by a light touch. It is hard to craft a readable yet accurate narrative of the Hellenistic period, to balance the breadth and diversity of the period with an engaging and intelligible narrative of events. This is as clear and engaging as it gets. It is, in my opinion, the best introduction to the Hellenistic period on the market.

Perhaps the most immediately striking aspect of this book is its chronological scope. *Age of Conquests* examine the broad spectrum of Greek history from Alexander to Hadrian, from 336 BC until AD 138. One of its most refreshing and intellectually stimulating features is the way Chaniotis thinks across traditional historical divisions, clarifying many of the historical trends of the Hellenistic world by examining their development into the Roman empire. Likewise, the world of the principate and early empire is contextualised by reference to its own Hellenistic past. One could push this further and study Carthage and the Roman Republic as Hellenistic states, tracing their historical development in conjunction with that of the Macedonian successor states in the eastern Mediterranean. A global Hellenistic world, if you will.

Chaniotis defines the chronological and geographical scope of the 'long Hellenistic age' probably more broadly that any other study of the Hellenistic period or early Roman empire. His main focus is arguably the "scientific, artistic, intellectual, and cultural achievements" of the Greek world, the cultural *koinē* of antiquity. The book touches on big themes such as monarchy, imperialism, interdependent political developments (Polybian *symplokē*), mobility, urbanisation, technological developments, and cultural homogenisation. Chaniotis' focus on the Greek experience as the common thread uniting the Hellenistic and imperial periods is logical. As he points out, from the League of Corinth under Philip and Alexander to the Panhellenion of Hadrian, the 'long Hellenistic age' is bracketed by the idea of Greek unity enforced and threatened by foreign imperialism.

This book is produced for a wide audience but it is shot through with Chaniotis' characteristic wide knowledge and deep scholarship. Literary, epigraphic, numismatic, archaeological, and art-historical evidence is effortlessly and expertly marshalled throughout. In addition to Greek and Latin sources, Jewish, Babylonian, and other non-Greek sources are also integrated. The narrative is well-paced and the scale of the change seen across the ancient world in these centuries is outlined clearly and concisely.

As an account of the Hellenistic and Imperial periods this book is riveting. It shows the speed of events and change highlighted by Polybius, the unification of global history under the aegis of Roman power.

The first twelve chapters are chronological, though common themes underpin them. Chapters 13–16 are thematic and examine the 'long Hellenistic age' as a single historical period, exploring the period in socio-economic, cultural, and religious terms. A final chapter on globalism places the Greek experience in the historical context of the spread of Greek culture throughout the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, from Cadiz to India. It is a fitting conclusion, examining the influence that the Greeks and Greek knowledge of the *oikoumenē* had on the ancient world.

Chapters 1–4 focus on the rise of Macedon and cover a roughly one hundred year period from Alexander the Great (336 BC) to Ptolemy IV (217 BC). This first part of the narrative, which covers the campaigns of Alexander, the wars of his successors, the rise of federal states in mainland Greece, *polis* independence, and the cultural dynamics of the Ptolemaic capital Alexandria, is rounded off by two thematic chapters (5–6) entitled 'Kings' and 'City-States', which provide excellent synthetic treatments of Macedonian kingship and the Greek city-state (*polis*), the two main pillars of the early Hellenistic age. It is hard to find a better introduction to the early Hellenistic period and, as a student of early Hellenistic history, I was impressed by Chaniotis' ability to write something that is simultaneously rewarding for both the academic and the general reader.

Chapters 7–10 form another unit and cover the Hellenistic world from the Roman arrival in the late third century until the death of Marc Antony and Cleopatra (30 BC). This is Polybius' era of entanglement (*symplokē*), when European, Asian, and African history coalesce with the rise of Rome to global dominance. History may have become entangled, but Chaniotis carefully examines the fragmented nature of much of Greek politics in the late third and early second centuries BC. The Roman conquest of the eastern Mediterranean is outlined, culminating with the end of the Antigonid (168 BC), Attalid (133 BC), Seleucid (63 BC), and Ptolemaic (30 BC) kingdoms. Focused digressions on Judaea (Hellenisation and Seleucid tension) and the Greeks in Bactria and India offer balance. The career of Pompey and the Mithridatic wars of the first century BC are excellently treated.

Chapters 11–12 conclude the narrative portion of the book by examining the rise of the Principate from Augustus to Nero, the Flavian dynasty, and the Nerva-Antonines. It is no accident that the book concludes with the *Graeculus*, Hadrian. Chaniotis maintains focus on the institution of the empire and the increasing monopolisation of power in the emperor's hands. He covers the rise of Christianity and examines how the historical developments of the period affected the Greek east. Much of what Chaniotis discusses here – the relationship between emperor and city, honours and ruler-cult, provincial administration, new foundations, civic life, and political organisation – are common themes that unite the book as a whole.

Chaniotis concludes with a final group of thematic chapters (13–16) that bring together the Hellenistic and Roman halves of the book. Chapter 13 examines the socio-economic conditions of the 'long Hellenistic age': social enhancement and education, mobility (army and private life), and the role of wealth in democracy. Chapter 14 treats of socio-cultural change: euergetism, games and festivals, the gymnasion, slavery, and the visibility of wealth. Examining the phenomenon of voluntary organisations, Chaniotis argues that as political participation declined private participation in voluntary societies grew. In Chapter 15 Chaniotis attempts to outline what is 'Hellenistic' about Hellenistic religion. He detects "a trend towards intense and visible displays of piety", "quantitative changes in celebrations", "theatrical display of feelings", "a fascination with the opposition between expectation and sudden change, between hope and the stroke of fate", and "the desire of mortals to receive divine protection from dangers and to establish a personal connection with one god". He also touches on Egyptian influence, detectable in the popularity of Isis and Sarapis, Mithras, Judaism, mystery cults, the afterlife, and the rise of Christianity and religious intolerance. The final chapter (16) turns to globalism and interconnectivity, interest in exploration, seen from the 330s with the campaigns of Alexander and the voyage of Pytheas of Massalia, movement of traders, philosophers, poets, and performers, as well as cultural convergence between Greece, Egypt, India, and Rome.

The book is excellently illustrated throughout with images, maps, a complete bibliography and a very thorough index. There are no footnotes, but each chapter is given a full list of further readings.

It is impossible for a book such as this not to have contemporary relevance. Issues such as globalisation, new religions, governance, and megacities are all pertinent to today's world. By the end of the book we witness a world where goods and peoples can move throughout the Roman empire, from Britain to Iraq and across North Africa, with a hitherto unprecedented degree of freedom. Naturally, in an empire spanning three continents a slow-moving process of provincialisation can be detected in the old Greek world. But never before or since has the Mediterranean world been as connected by such free and open movement of peoples, goods, and ideas through Europe, Asia, and North Africa as it was in the first two centuries AD. There are lessons here for the 21st century.

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