

Danielle Allen, Paul Christesen and Paul Millett, eds., *How To Do Things With History: New Approaches to Ancient Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. P. xiii, 404. ISBN: 978-0-190-64989-0 (hardcover). \$85.00.

The intriguing title of this collection of thirteen academic articles calls for an explanation. Paul Cartledge, the inspiration for the volume, reveals in the *Afterword* the significance of the title. It is the same as that of the conference given in his honour upon stepping down as the inaugural A. G. Leventis Professor of Greek Culture at the University of Cambridge in 2014. In their *Introduction* (pp. 1-17), the editors frame the contributions as continuing the pragmatic historicism of Cartledge, which follows the argument that “beliefs are rules for action” (pp. 1 and 3). Historians, as Cartledge himself explains, “study the past, or rather pasts, and it is they themselves who ‘make’ history, in the sense that they give meaningful shape to such past events and processes as they deem to satisfy the criteria of truth and accuracy” (pp. 16 and 394-395).

The articles provide a remarkably wide perspective on how to approach Greek history. This is a testimony to Cartledge’s multidisciplinary historical methodology, which is noted in the *Introduction* and in the *Afterword*. The contributions come from many leading scholars of the ancient world, with the majority having connections to Cambridge. All take their inspiration from Cartledge’s work. Each article represents an important contribution to its topic, specific or broad and several are important must-reads for students and teachers of ancient history in general (Raaflaub, Ober and Weingast). The studies on the major Athenian authors (Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes), comparative Greek and world history, social criticism and gender theory, art history, Marxism and economic theory applied to the study of Antiquity and the writing of anti-Roman history are all fundamental contributions to their subjects, or are glimpses into ongoing larger academic projects which promise to be significant.

The articles are organized, often as pairs, within the framework of three broad themes. In their *Introduction* the editors provide a brief and very useful synopsis of each article. A general index (pp. 397-406) at the end helps to further negotiate the themes shared across the papers.

Part One, *Theory and Practice*, begins with a paper by Kurt A. Raaflaub entitled “The ‘Great Leap’ in Early Greek Politics and Political Thought: A Comparative Perspective” (pp. 21-54). His study argues that the development of Greek politics departed radically from its near and contemporary cultures, following the development of “an *explicitly political* concept of liberty” (p. 47, italics his). The paper takes a step in the direction of defining comparatively the importance and indeed the particularism of the *polis* as a political entity.

Three literary studies exploring the relationship of theory and practice follow: “Pericles’ *Utopia*: A Reading of Thucydides and Plato” by Emily Greenwood (pp. 55-

80), “How to Turn History into Scenario: Plato’s *Republic* Book 8 on the Role of Political Office in Constitutional Change” by Melissa Lane (pp. 81-108) and “‘Cyrus appeared both great and good’: Xenophon and Performativity of Kingship” by Carol Attack (pp. 109-136).

The first two are linked through Platonic themes. The work of Greenwood considers how the ascendancy of Pericles, in the works of Thucydides and Plato, “was represented and interpreted in terms, both positive and critical, belonging to an expanded model of utopian thought” (p. 57). Beginning with the idealized version of Athens from the Funeral Oration in Book 2 of Thucydides, Greenwood continues her analysis through the complicated reception of Pericles in the works of Plato. She demonstrates how the Athenian statesman often serves as an anti-model of utopian thought in the work of the philosopher.

Lane’s contribution at first frames the 8th book of Plato’s *Republic* which examines the “future” degeneration of the perfect constitution of *Callipolis*, as challenging and departing from the declaration of Thucydides that his own work is a possession for all time (1, 22, 4). With this framing she places the work of Plato within the realm of historic thought in that it investigates the mechanisms of social change. As Lane traces the importance of office to the passage of the ideal city through the stages of its metaphoric history (timocracy, oligarchy and democracy), she reveals the Platonic idea of office should “aim at the unity of the *politeia* and be used for the good of those ruled” (p. 105).

Attack’s analysis of the ways in which Xenophon portrays kingship, is informative and comprehensive. She interprets Xenophon’s kings through lenses of performativity and spectacle. She establishes how kingship functions like gender, and her effort contributes to the current scholarly trend restoring Xenophon as an important political thinker.

“Juror and Serial Killers: Loneliness, Deliberation, and Community in Ancient Athens,” by Alastair J. L. Blanshard (pp. 137-158), demonstrates that despite the overwhelming degree of social interaction in Athenian daily life, the law court was one arena where jurors would have to reach decisions without the consultation of friends and family. Advocates played upon this isolation of the jurors. The examples of forensic oratory, which Blanshard cites, reveal the far-reaching and complex decisions jurors would have to reach in isolation from their support networks.

Part Two, *Economy and Society: Violence, Gender, and Class*, contains four articles. Two articles on Marx and Antiquity make up a pivot point in the center of the volume. They are enclosed between two examples of a new Stanford version of historicism (p. 9, formulation of the editors).

“The Sparta Game: Violence, Proportionality, Austerity, Collapse,” by Josiah Ober and Barry R. Weingast (pp. 161-184), examines Spartan history and constitution through the lens of the economic “proportionality principle”. They coin this phrase to

describe what they call the Spartan limited economic access order and informal equilibrium. The principle “holds that the stability of a regime in which ruling elites extract revenues from non-elites through violence (or its threat) requires that each elite receive a share of rents proportionate to his potential to employ disruptive violence” (p. 10). This accounts for the stability of the regime including the “coordinated social uses of systematic violence, the public facade of material equality among the citizen population, the maintenance of a self-enforcing regime of austerity by an extensive body of citizens, and the severe demographic decline that led to Sparta’s eventual loss of standing in the Greek World” (p. 162). This is an important article on Sparta and a succinct and convincing description of Spartan history and social practices.

The two articles that invoke Marx — “Marx and Antiquity,” by Wilfried Nippel (pp. 185-207) and “Marxism and Ancient History,” by Kostas Vlassopoulos (pp. 209-235) — form a welcome set of companion pieces. Nippel offers an introduction to the complicated nature of Marx’s interaction with Antiquity over the course of his intellectual career. Vlassopoulos presents an analysis of the character and contribution of Marxism in the Classics and advances the concerns faced by Marxist history writing over the last 30 years.

“Building for the State: A World-Historical Perspective,” by Walter Schiedel (pp. 237-259), catalogues the use of *corvée*-based construction from Ancient civilizations in the Americas, South and Southeast Asia, Japan, China and the Ancient Near East. He concludes with a comparison to the Ancient Mediterranean and observes the apparent lack of any systematic use of *corvée* labour construction in Ancient Greece or Rome. Schiedel theorizes the absence of such a system is contingent and fragile, tied to the particular type of socio-political organization in the Mediterranean Antiquity (p. 253). As Schiedel explains, in Athens, the state owned slaves to carry out certain tasks and hired labor for others. He states, “the latter arrangement was firmly grounded in market relations” (p. 253). The broad scope of the article is ambitious. It is no doubt a synopsis of a larger more detailed work.

Part Three, *Source Pluralism*, underscores the diversity of sources available for historical interpretation.

Two articles in art history begin this final section. Jeremy Tanner, in “Picturing History: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Tyrannicide in the Art of Classical Athens and Early Imperial China” (pp. 263-312), compares the depictions of the Roman marble copy of the fifth century BCE Greek bronze group of Harmodius and Aristogeiton with a frieze from an Eastern Han tomb, of the second century CE, that depicts the attempt of Jing Ke to assassinate the king of Qin. Tanner transcends not only the divide of time, culture and space of Ancient Greece and Han China, but continues the analysis of the aesthetic of liberationist violence in modern times.

“Imaginary Intercourse: An Illustrated History of Greek Pederasty,” by Robin Osborne (pp. 313-338), argues that the depictions of interactions between men and

boys, according to Beazley's classification (α , β , γ) do not represent a narrative of courtship. He continues that depictions of "intercrural intercourse" (Beazley's γ classification) in the remaining corpus do not represent realistic depictions of sex acts. Osborne asserts after reviewing the literary evidence "that 'intercrural intercourse' is a myth, a modern scholars' fantasy" (p. 327). The 'naturalism' of the representation, Osborne states, "does not require, or depend upon, the actions that they depict ever having been observed in life, we can both understand the pictures for what they are – explorations of fantasies of homoerotic desire – and liberate real-life Greeks from supposedly nonnegotiable conventions" (p. 328). Osborne's argument suggests research that has interpreted these images as depictions of actual sex acts should be re-examined.

"The Boys from Cydathenaeum: Aristophanes versus Cleon Again," by Edith Hall (pp. 339-363), offers a rehabilitation of the reputation of Cleon, from the same texts that have traditionally been interpreted as critical of the Athenian demagogue. Hall provides a reading of the *Knights* as somewhat of a celebration of Cleon, with his personality, politics and policies on full display before the Athenian public with Cleon himself in the audience (*Knights*, 203, 703-4). The reading demonstrates that the Sausage-seller protagonist of the *Knights* effectively out-Cleon's Cleon, placing the demagogue front and center of the winning Athenian comedy.

The final paper in the volume — "How to Write Anti-Roman History," by Tim Whitmarsh (pp. 365-389) — considers the tradition of anti-Roman historiography. It does so through the identification of an unnamed historian to whom Dionysius of Halicarnassus addresses his defense of writing early Roman history. Whitmarsh argues that the anti-Roman historian is Metrodorus of Scepsis who wrote in the court of Mithridates VI Eupator.

The *Afterword* (pp. 391-396) by the honorand of the volume gives context to the conference that was the occasion for this publication and to the people who participated. He concludes with a brief comment on the importance of history writing today. This volume is wide-ranging and should attract a wide distribution and readership.

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