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# Opuscula

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Cover illustrations from Aiopoulou *et al.* in this volume, p. 48.

mortuary sphere, Vasiliki Lambrou, Ourania Palli and Asterios Aidonis discuss the first results of the study of burial traditions in Thesprotia in Epirus during the Roman period, with observed continuities and changes over time. Eleni Trakosopoulou-Salakidou, Anna Panti and Spyros Vasileiou give an archaeological presentation of the finds in the eastern cemetery of Thessaloniki, while Vassiliki Christopoulou, Nikolas Dimakis and Kiriakos Xanthopoulos present a Roman monumental burial edifice in Cos used continuously from the mid-1st up to the 3rd century AD.

The final theme, 'The Roman past in the present', consists of four contributions. Konstantinos L. Zachos presents the archaeological park of Nicopolis in Epirus, Athanasia Psalti, Eleni Spiliotopoulou and Styliani Ropaka choose two monuments from the archaeological site of Delphi (the *heroon* G. Blum and the Roman *agora*) to illustrate the preservation and enhancement of the Roman monuments of the site, while Dionysios Roubien tackles with the problem of the management of the Roman monuments of Patras within the modern urban environment. Polyxeni N. Barka's "alternative" approach to the history and monuments of Roman Nicopolis through the pages of a comic closes this section and the main body of the conference contributions.

The 'Afterword' by Susan E. Alcock acts as a short review of the research aspects presented in the volume "in order to illustrate the new range of attitudes and approaches, to celebrate 'What's new in Roman Greece'" (p. 600).

This conference on new archaeological discoveries and new research attitudes in the treatment of the Roman past and present in Greece is a most welcome contribution to the academic studies on Greek antiquity. The proceedings, following the different theme panels of the conference itself, embrace a wide variety of topics which are organized and presented in a concrete and well-structured manner. The diversity of places chosen and discussed is remarkable, with the spotlight carefully taken away from Athens and the other major urban centres without ignoring them. This regional mosaic of Roman landscapes, touching upon different manifestations of the material culture in Greece, reveals the potential of new (micro-) regional approaches in the attempt to put the Greek provinces into the cultural map of the Roman Empire. Special mention is due to the final theme of this conference, which highlights the need for and recent efforts in the management of the surviving remnants of Roman Greece within the modern Greek urban and social structure.

However, although this is evidently a significant effort to promote further research on Roman Greece, there are still a few shortcomings apparent when reading through the volume. To start with, the main chronological focus is on the Imperial period, with far fewer contributions reaching the two ends of the time spectrum in the Late Hellenistic era and in Late Antiquity, both of them marking transitional phases which can be

extremely interesting and revealing. Furthermore, regarding the geographical span, some lack of balance in the regions discussed is noticed. Central and southern Greece are clearly dominant, whereas Macedonia is significantly under-represented, with just Thessaloniki featured thrice and with one contribution about Chalkidiki. The islands are also not elaborately presented, focusing only on Delos, Lesbos and Cos, while Crete, although a very extensive and distinct region by itself, is seen in only a sole paper. Even within central and southern Greece, Thessaly is virtually absent, while Epirus, albeit seemingly well represented, is almost totally focused on Nicopolis which appears in six papers spread in different sections of the volume. Apropos the nature of the contributions, the overwhelming majority concern recent archaeological work in Greece and have therefore the form of detailed excavation reports, while other relevant research areas that have plentiful new findings to present, such as epigraphy, are scarcely taken into account. The biggest observed shortcoming regarding the types of evidence used in the exploration of one theme is found in the 'Economy and exchange' section where the emphasis is almost exclusively on pottery and other ceramic material, leaving other types of evidence for the ancient economy surprisingly absent, such as the numismatic material represented only by a sole contribution (Papageorgiadou).

Despite this, as already said and considering the fact that the Roman period in Greece, although brought to research light to a notable degree during the last decades, is still in need of (re)appraisal and further investigation, the conference volume *What's new in Roman Greece* is a vital boost in the attempt at demarginalizing and contextualizing the Roman presence in the Greek provinces within the broader frame of the history and the material culture of the region.

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L.M.Andersen Funder, T. Myrup Kristensen, & V. Nørskov, *Classical heritage and European identities. The imagined landscapes of Danish classicism*. Abingdon: Routledge 2019. 125 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-31750-5.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429455179>

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The thriving field of classical reception studies remains marginal in the Nordic countries. *Classical heritage and European identities* is a timely contribution since it may indicate a shift in attitude among Nordic classicists. *Classical heritage* is a very short and rough outline of how classical heritage has been negotiated in Denmark primarily during the 19th and 20th centuries.

*Classical heritage* presents three case studies. The first case study accounts for the development of *Oldtidskunskap*, a subject taught today in Danish schools. The second chapter charts the history of the collections of classical antiquities in Danish museums, and the third case study concerns the Danish excavations at Halikarnassos and other sites in the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition, the introduction of *Classical heritage* presents a theoretical framework. *Classical heritage* ends with a short conclusion.

*Oldtidskunskap*, “Ancient studies” in English, is a current secondary school subject which was introduced in 1907. The 19th-century ideological negotiations which preceded the establishment of *Oldtidskunskap* are accounted for in detail. Although classicism and Hellenism as it had been formulated by Johan Nicolai Madvig prevailed from the beginning, it was contested by ideas, associated with Nikolaj Fredrik Severin Grundtvig, that the domestic Old Norse history should constitute the bulk of the subject. *Oldtidskunskap* became a subject in which the achievements of classical Greece are taught. The curriculum disseminates an idealized classical Greek culture, and exemplary ancient Greek texts, such as drama, philosophy, and poetry, are read in translation. A primary aim with *Oldtidskunskap* is to promote *dannelse*—the Danish equivalent of the German *Bildung*. I was surprised to learn that Roman history is only marginally addressed in *Oldtidskunskap*. In contrast, Hellenism stands strong in Denmark, as it is disseminated in the secondary school system.

The second case study in *Classical heritage* concerns the collections of classical antiquities in the Nationalmuseum and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen. This chapter offers the most detailed analysis. It begins with an account of how early 18th- and 19th-century private collections of antiquities were acquired. It presents the story of how a few men from the elite brought antiquities back to Denmark and how these collections were transformed into public museums. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the displays of these collections. This museological analysis is rich in detail and rewarding reading. The analysis shows how exhibited objects contribute to sustain the construction of Danish classicism and nationalism.

The third case study in *Classical heritage* concerns Danish excavations in the Eastern Mediterranean, for instance at Lindos (1902–1905) and Kalydon (1926–1935). In particular, it is the excavations in Halikarnassos (1966–) that are presented in detail. Like the other chapters, this also tells the story of Danish classicism through a protagonist. The excavations in Halikarnassos were initiated by Kristian Jeppesen. He was primarily interested in public and exemplary classical architecture, and the excavations were focused on the Mausoleum. Jeppesen was obsessed with the Mausoleum and he also put much effort into its reconstruction. His research is presented as *Bauforschung*, i.e. a field in classical archaeology which

elaborates architecture from classical antiquity. Traditionally, *Bauforschung* concerns public and exemplary buildings.

The conclusion of the book recapitulates the findings of the case studies and concludes that Danish classicism is deeply enshrined in Danish identity. As a short introduction to a national classicism this is an excellent study. The case studies are relevant and illustrate how Danish ethno-classicism is negotiated.

Nevertheless, also this book raises some concerns. It is delimited to an analysis of the three mentioned case studies. *Classical heritage* does not address the articulation of Danish classicism in arts, literature, or theatre performances of ancient drama.

The chapter concerning *Oldtidskunskap* does not include an analysis of the course material. So, while it is interesting that the emphasis was on an idealized Greek antiquity, much remains to be said about this. It would have been relevant to have had an analysis of the actual syllabus used in this course: after all, idealizations can also vary.

Contextualizations are on the whole too narrow in *Classical heritage*. I am in particular thinking of the categorization of Jeppesen’s research as *Bauforschung*. I do not object to the denomination *per se*, but there is a wider background which is relevant here. That is, *Bauforschung* is a research field which studies public and exemplary classical architecture. It is branch of classical archaeology which is driven by a focus on architectural elements with aesthetic qualities. This is, however, an epistemological perspective which is wider in classical studies. The so-called “big dig” tradition is founded on the same epistemology. A similar agenda also governs a large part of classical archaeology concerning other categories of materials, such as sculptures and vases. *Bauforschung* is part of a wider field in classical archaeology, which resembles art history since it focuses on the study of aesthetic objects and the diachronic stylistic/typological evolution of various kinds of finds. In my view it is a shortcoming that *Classical heritage* does not address how *Bauforschung* and Danish classicism are related to the “big” tradition or the general positivism of traditional classical studies.

Furthermore, I find it remarkable that the antiquarian or proto-archaeological expeditions of the 18th and 19th centuries and how they contributed to shape classical archaeology are not discussed. Foreign archaeological excavations in the Mediterranean until c. the 1870s were often private expeditions organized by aristocrats on the hunt for antiquities to bring home. These expeditions developed an epistemological agenda which continues to shape traditional classical archaeology. The archaeological activities of Peter Oluf Brønsted, who joined the excavations of the temple of Aphaia on Aegina in 1810 and led excavations on Kea in 1811–1812, are only mentioned *en passant*. However, to be fair, his contribution to the establishment of Hellenism in Denmark receives more attention. It is surprising to me that

the antiquarian tradition is more or less ignored in *Classical heritage*.

The theoretical framework which is outlined in the introduction is pertinent. The authors have produced a conceptual framework which they use consistently in the case studies. This is admirable. *Classical heritage* is anchored in a theoretical framework which consists of Jeff Malpas' theory about place and space, and a modified version of Benedict Anderson's concept "imagined communities". Fine, this works. Yet, why do we classicists tend to be eager to be up-to-date when it comes to research on the analytical evidence, but find it acceptable to relate to theoretical concepts belatedly? That is, we often use adequate theoretical concepts which have been around for a while, but ignore the ensuing discussion of the original concept. In *Classical heritage*, *habitus* is mentioned, but Pierre Bourdieu's study is not. Nor does *Classical heritage* address the issues concerning *habitus* that have been raised in archaeology and several other academic disciplines. Mentioning a theoretical concept without explication is inadequate.

Notwithstanding my criticism, I find this to be an excellent book and I hope that the authors will continue to explore further facets of classical reception. *Classical heritage* will hopefully be followed by further studies on Danish and Nordic classicisms.

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J.-L. Fournet, *The rise of Coptic. Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity* (The Rostovzeff Lectures), Oxford & Princeton: Princeton University Press 2020. 224 pp.  
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The four chapters of this book, originating from lectures its author held at Princeton University in late 2017, unravel the story of how Coptic expanded in Late Antiquity into the domain of law and jurisdiction, thereby partly replacing Greek, which had dominated administration in Egypt for many centuries.

In Chapter 1 'An Egyptian exception?', the author examines the linguistic situation in Egypt during the Late Roman Empire, noting how slow it was for Egyptian language to be used again for legal transactions after the Demotic script had been ousted from administration in the 1st century AD. The use of Coptic, as Egyptian in its revived alphabetic shape is known as, remained restricted for a long time. Next to Christian key texts, Coptic seems to have been used only for non-regulated written exchanges, to wit letters, although Jean-Luc

Fournet himself identifies one exceptional Coptic loan receipt from Kellis in the Dakhla oasis dating to the 4th century (p. 19). Claims that Coptic was already used in this early period in summaries or chancellery notes to Greek legal documents are dispelled through the author's review of the extant documents. He demonstrates convincingly that in all known instances Coptic portions in these early texts (readily at hand in Appendix I) have been subsequently added. The situation in Egypt appears, indeed, to be an exception, since, as Fournet shows in an interesting regional outlook, unlike Coptic, Syriac was used both for legal documents and in public epigraphy. The dissimilar status of the two languages is also reflected in the fact that Syriac-speaking participants in the Ecumenical Councils could put their signature in Syriac to the Greek documents, whereas not a single instance is known of an Egyptian bishop having subscribed in Coptic.

Chapter 2 is titled 'Why was Greek preferred to Coptic?'. A decisive factor was certainly the prestige of Greek, which had been in place as a legal language in Egypt since the Ptolemaic period, and possessed a highly elaborate legal vocabulary. In addition, the use of Greek was furthered by its role in the Church. Its prestige is reflected in the Greek influence on Coptic (c. 20% of words in any text are Greek), but also in the format and appearance of documents (i.e. diplomatics). More speculative is the suggestion that the inability to present *one* written standard was an impediment for Coptic to develop use for administrative or legal acts. To me it seems that the idea of the "handicap of multidialectism" (p. 48) is exaggerated. Likewise, I do not see that Coptic is more "artificial" (p. 47) than other written standards (as Ferdinand de Saussure said: "*Langue et écriture sont deux systèmes de signes distincts*"). By all means, the differences between the different written standards are not so great that they would have hindered effective communication. Moreover, I think one can make the point that Coptic did eventually develop into a legal language at a time when different written standards still persisted although fewer than in the beginning of written Coptic. An image emerges of culturally profoundly Hellenized individuals from urban milieus who elevated their vernacular into a "prestige variety" to complement Greek, and not to compete with it. It might well be, as the author suggests, that they did not even intend a more extended use of (written) Coptic precisely due to their bicultural background.

Chapter 3, 'The rise of legal Coptic and the Byzantine state', describes the gradual advance of Coptic into the legal domain starting from the second half of the 6th century AD. Still, the dependency on Greek legal texts is evident in the 16 datable legal acts preserved from the period before the Arab Conquest (detailed in Appendix 3). Fournet's analysis reveals that they are not signed by notaries in the strict sense of the term; rather, they can be classified as "pseudonotarial private acts". In this first phase, Coptic was used for temporary trans-