

**Kostas VLASSOPOULOS, *Greeks and Barbarians***, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, XXII + 392 pp., ISBN 978-0-52-176468-1, £64.99 (hb.) / ISBN 978-0-52-114802-3, £25.99 (pb.).

Scholars investigating relationships between the ancient Greeks and other ethnic groups not only have to examine an immense amount of data, but they also have to make a difficult choice as to how they should describe contacts with so many peoples who in many cases differ from one another to a large extent. This situation is complicated by the fact that contacts between Greeks and non-Greeks very often varied depending on the place in which they occurred. What is more, the Greeks themselves were not uniform. For instance, in the archaic and classical periods, the Athenians and Cypriotes were considerably different in many aspects of everyday life such as language (dialect), script, political system, religion etc. The question arises if it is at all possible to present such complex relationships between the Greeks and their neighbours in one volume.

The book entitled *Greeks and Barbarians* by Kostas VLASSOPOULOS [= V.] can be treated as a positive answer to this question. Of course, the author had to select from the evidence and to emphasise certain issues while indicating only cursorily or passing over others, but he truly managed to achieve an impressive result. The book consists of eight main chapters whose titles reveal its character: 1. "Introduction" (pp. 1–33); 2. "The Panhellenic world and the world of empires" (pp. 34–77); 3. "The world of networks and the world of *apoikiai*" (pp. 78–128); 4. "Intercultural communication" (pp. 129–160); 5. "The Barbarian repertoire in Greek culture" (pp. 161–225); 6. "Globalisation and glocalisation" (pp. 226–277); 7. "The Hellenistic world" (pp. 278–320); 8. "Conclusions" (pp. 321–331).

V. focuses, first of all, on contacts in archaic and classical times, which is generally the subject of the introduction and chapters 2–6. In turn, chapter 7, which in principle is a separate part of the book, deals with intercultural relationships in Hellenistic times (only some issues connected with this period are mentioned in the previous chapters, especially in chapter 6). It is a pity that the author did not decide to add one more chapter devoted to the Mycenaean period as such a chapter would have made the book much more complete. Unfortunately, the author sometimes seems to forget about the Bronze Age, e.g. in the following statement: "Before 700 monumental buildings and monumental sculpture in stone were largely unknown in Greece and most areas of the Mediterranean world" (p. 231).

V. bases his work on four kinds of sources: literary, epigraphic, archaeological and numismatic (he does not take into consideration any linguistic data, especially loanwords; there is also no mention of genetic or isotopic methods). It is worth underlining that he makes use of a vast amount of evidence. Thus the reader has the opportunity to acquaint him or herself with many important and interesting types of data, including data that is not to be found in earlier books concerning contacts between the Greeks and other peoples. There are only a few points where one can object to insufficient criticism of the literary texts. This is evident e.g. on p. 98, where the author, on the basis of Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles* (26, 5) writes the following: "The renegade Themistocles managed to avoid the checkpoints in order to reach the Persian court by concealing himself in a closed wagon and by having his attendants claim that they were carrying a woman of Greek origin, whom they were taking from Ionia to one of the Persian nobles at the palace". I assume that the author treats this story as untrue. However, the lack of any comments regarding its historicity may point to a contrary conclusion. As regards the archaeological data, the description of some objects with respect to their date or place of origin is not wholly precise, e.g. on pp. 159 f. we read about a statuette of Osiris with a Greek dedication, but we are not informed as to where this

statuette was discovered and when it is dated to. Nevertheless, there are truly only a few such cases in the book.

As the titles of the chapters listed above may already indicate, V. particularly focuses in his work on the nature of relationships and their consequences. Special attention should be drawn to his concept of four parallel worlds. This interesting concept is both the subject of two chapters (2 and 3) and appears in many other places in the book. What exactly are these worlds? The author explains this in the introduction (pp. 11 f.):

In order to understand the complex relationships between Greeks and Barbarians we need to move beyond a simplistic definition between two separate and self-enclosed entities. Greeks and non-Greeks encountered and interacted with each other in a variety of different ways and contexts; exploring these encounters and interactions requires situating them within four parallel, yet interconnected, worlds; the world of networks; the world of *apoikiai*; the Panhellenic world; and the world of empires. To a certain extent, these four worlds involved different geographical areas; while, for example, the world of empires comprised the eastern Mediterranean, the world of *apoikiai* largely focused on the western Mediterranean and the Black Sea. But more important is the fact that these four worlds involved different form of interaction and encounters between Greeks and non-Greeks.

Generally speaking, V. provides a wide range of a variety of data and draws reliable conclusions from it. I would like to indicate only one specific detail that shows a kind of inconsistency. On p. 29 the author writes: “Greek culture lacked intertextuality and translation of foreign text”, and, similarly, on p. 165: “Translations were effectively unheard of”. But this statement sounds slightly different on pp. 216–218, where the author writes as follows:

“Bilingualism” and translations were rare in archaic and classical Greek literature, but a convincing case can be made for the fourth-century astronomer and mathematician Eudoxus of Cnidos. [...] The pharaoh gave him access to the priests of Heliopolis, where Eudoxus spent a year and a half with them [...]; it is this immersion that made possible Eudoxus’ translation into Greek of an Egyptian work entitled *Dialogues of Dogs*.

In this context we can add another convincing case: I mean here *The Voyage of Hanno*, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC, which is commonly credited to be a translation from Punic. I wonder why V. did not mention this work.

There is no doubt that *Greek and Barbarians* is a useful introduction and even a kind of companion to the issue of contacts between Greeks and non-Greeks in the first millennium BC. This work can be treated both as an academic handbook and as an important contribution to research on such a complex and controversial problem<sup>1</sup>.

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