In the last 30 years, every book of epigrams by Martial has received some sort of commentary of its own, even though some of these are unpublished and the quality of the commentaries varies. It all began it 1975 with M. Citroni’s commentary on Book I. Reviewers have mentioned that it was a pity that P. Howell was also working on Book I at the same time (his commentary was published in 1980), but the two books actually complement each other. After five years, N. M. Kay’s commentary on Book XI came out (1985), and starting with 1995, there has been a new commentary almost every year: in 1995 P. Howell on Book V; in 1996 T. J. Leary on Book XIV (Apophoreta); in 1997 F. Grewing on Book VI; in 1998 and 1999 C. Henriksén on Book IX; in 2001 T. J. Leary again, this time on Book XIII (Xenia); in 2002 G. Galán Vioque on Book VII and C. Schöffel on Book VIII; in 2004 C. A. Williams on Book II; and a group of authors under the editorship of G. Damschen and A. Heil on Book X. (For selected epigrams of Book X there is also an unpublished and therefore quite inaccessible commentary by J. Jenkins, Diss. Cambridge 1981.) Finally in 2006, A. Fusi published his commentary on Book III, K. M. Coleman hers on Liber spectaculorum, and R. Moreno Soldevila hers on Book IV. For Book XII there is an unpublished commentary by M. N. R. Bowie (Diss. Oxford 1988).

Fusi’s book is a good old combination of introduction, critical text, translation and commentary. With 580 pages it is one of the most voluminous commentaries on Martial’s epigrams, but it still does not reach the amount of pages in the editions of Schöffel (723 p.), Moreno Soldevila (628 p.), Galán Vioque (606 p., no translation) or Grewing (592 p., no text, no translation). That said, I would like to call attention to Piergiorgio Parroni’s short but sapid preface to Fusi’s commentary (p. 7–14), in which he gives a summary of previous commentaries on Martial’s books, but also expresses his opinions about what he considers an ideal edition of Martial. He condemns what he calls “commenti mastodontici,” the stacking of specific details that are not really necessary for understanding the text and that do not add much even as excursive displays of erudition and wide reading. He calls for brevitas, which, however, does not mean ieiunitas (p. 8). In addition, Parroni attacks the most recent Teubner editor (1990), D. R. Shackleton Bailey, for deeming a new inspection of manuscript tradition of Martial a futile enterprise, an arare litus. He forcefully argues that it is important to furnish scholars with a first-hand apparatus, which also separates canonical cumulative sigla of the manuscript families into certain groups of manuscripts (thus preventing the attribution to the archetype of a reading that is actually preserved in one
codex only), distinguishes more accurately the chronological sequence of various scribes, eliminates the inaccuracies that are likely to arise when an apparatus is built only upon previous ones, etc. (p. 10). Shackleton Bailey had relied on the review of M. Citroni’s minute inspection of manuscript variants by J. Delz (MH 34 [1977], 259), who concluded that this had hardly influenced Citroni’s text, which almost entirely coincides with that of Heraeus. Thus, we are dealing with two contrary textological and editorial principles. Indeed, Parroni calls for a new critical edition of Martial (p. 11) to replace that of Shackleton Bailey, which has been criticised by others as well (cf. S. Lorenz, ‘Martial 1970–2003’ in Lustrum 46 [2004], 171–172; Parroni expressed this view already in his article ‘Su alcuni epigrammi di Marziale (in margine a una recente edizione)’ in RPL 16 [1993], p. 57).

Fusi’s introduction (54 pages) is a useful survey of Martial’s Book III. A more general study of the book (including Martial’s ‘exile’ in Forum Corneli) is followed by a section on the chronology of the book (Friedlaender had dated it to 87/88, but Fusi prefers 88). He then touches upon the question of the possible hospes of Martial, and goes on to present a synopsis of the topics treated in Book III. There follow sections on the arrangement of the epigrams and on the publication and dedication of Martial’s work.

After reading Parroni’s preface one guesses that in this edition much room is devoted to the tradition of text (both manuscripts and editions) and editorial principles, and indeed Fusi treats these questions on 27 pages. The Latin text presented in this edition is an outcome of the author’s complete collation of the manuscripts and printed editions (p. 95). A very useful ‘tavola sinottica’ on pp. 555–556 shows that Fusi generally tends to prefer the old Teubneriana of Heraeus–Borovskij to those of Shackleton Bailey or Lindsay (OCT). Due attention is given to some of Shackleton Bailey’s most notable interventions (sometimes his own, sometimes adoptions of earlier conjectures), such as nolle for velle in 3.26.5 or tibi ... ponis for ubi ... potas in 3.49.1, but that does not mean that all of his readings are rejected (cf., e.g., 3.73.2, 3.93.18). In some passages (3.7.5 f., 3.28.1, 3.32.1), Fusi presents his own reading, even if this affects only punctuation, and in some cases he prefers punctuation proposed by other scholars (3.11.3, 3.20.3 f. Izaac) or manuscripts (3.32.3). Fusi admits (p. 96) that his apparatus also contains manuscript variants that are of little or no use for the constitution of the text, but can nevertheless be helpful in reconstructing the transmission history of the text. Thus, his edition can be useful not only as a text of Martial, but also as a source for various studies of textual tradition, which distinguishes it from that of Shackleton Bailey.

The main part of the edition has a familiar structure, consisting of the Latin text of an epigram, apparatus criticus, Italian translation, an introductory note and line-by-line commentary on various textual, stylistic, literal, historical, topographical and metrical questions. Fusi admits (p. 100) that his model is the edition of Book I by M. Citroni (1975), which he considers unbeaten by any later commentary.

I will not go into detail regarding specific epigrams and their interpretations. A commentary is a book that one does not, as a rule, read through all at a time, but when there is a need for a comment, it should give clear and thorough answers to any questions that might arise. On the whole, Fusi has succeeded in this task. He elegantly walks the reader through various problems, citing other scholars in a manner that generally leaves an impression of a true dialogue. The complete lack of footnotes
in commentary sections is a matter of taste. In most of the book this actually improves the readability of the text, but in some passages with extensive bibliographical information or quotations, traditional notes would probably have been a better solution. Perhaps it also would have been helpful to add a short bibliographical section to each epigram (cf. the commentaries of Galán Vioque on Book VII and Schöffel on Book VIII) and a complete bibliography instead of the list of works referred to in abbreviated form. S. Lorenz’s survey of scholarship on Martial 1970–2003 (part I, in Lustrum 45 [2004], 167–277) seems to have come out too late for Fusi to use. The edition also contains a very useful analytical index (24 pages), but lacks an index locorum.

To conclude, I would recommend this edition to every student and scholar of Martial, first of all because of its sound presentation of secondary information necessary for the comprehension of all the nuances of Martial’s often ingenious humour, and secondly for its ability to clarify several mistakes and misinterpretations of earlier scholars.
These two recent books from Gorgias Press’ *Dissertations* series discuss some important aspects in theological thinking of Saint Ephrem (303–373). Buchan’s book comes from the intellectual atmospheres of the Drew University and Princeton Theological Seminary, while Shemunkasho’s dissertation is a product of Oxford Syriology. The books under review are the first monographic treatments of corresponding aspects in Ephrem’s voluminous theological writings, mostly written in poetry. Both books are new, innovative and important, while the second of the two is a result of much more meticulous philological work than the first. Buchan’s book is important in that it collects the evidence for theological images of Christ’s descent to the Dead in Ephrem’s writings, but it does it in a rather loose way — quotations from Ephrem’s writings often follow each other page after page, and some passages repeat themselves many times in the book. There are no indexes in either books and consequently none of the passages quoted, so the reader is forced to go through all the material to find what interests him or her. Shemunkasho’s book is much better structured: the headings guide the reader quite well and there is much good philological work invested in it. In Buchan’s book there is not much philology — original texts in Syriac are not represented and only a few Syriac terms are discussed. Accordingly, Buchan’s book seems to fit best for undergraduate students as a chrestomatic course-book, illustrating the history of a Christian dogma. Such achievement is a little off the mark if we bear in mind that Christ’s descent to the Dead is a very interesting subject both to historians of religion and the historians of Christian doctrines. Shemunkasho’s book stands on a much higher philological level, and it can be seen as a definitive treatment of the corresponding issue.

The rest of the current review will discuss images that Ephrem uses in his theological thinking in respect to their origin. The material is culled from these two recent books on Ephrem. The theological images he used did not come from a vacuum and are not only creations of the mind of the 4th century Church Father. It was my suspicion — and it grew into a deep conviction after studying these two books — that in the poetic images of the writings of early Syrian Christianity one can detect many traces of the ancient Near Eastern spirituality, either of Syrian or Mesopotamian origin. The modern scholars of ancient Near Eastern religion and religious iconography (Assyriologists or Ugaritologists, who study such important spiritual symbols as the Medicine of Life, the Tree of Life, the images of clothing, the motifs of divine descent and ascent, or the weather images such as thunder, rain and springs) may be surprised to find that in the writings of Ephrem all these symbols are wrought together into many theological systems and sub-systems, where one symbol may easily become a part of another. Accordingly, following Ephrem’s thinking may cast light...
on the symbolic worlds of ancient Syria and Mesopotamia which pre-date Christianity in their essences and have a new application in the Christian spiritual world. That is to say, it demonstrates that some building blocks of St. Ephrem’s symbolic world have their origin in ancient Syrian and Mesopotamian “paganism.”

During my studies of the monographs under review, some very clear parallels became evident between Ephrem’s treatment of Christ’s dealings with Death and the Ugaritic Baal cycle. In Ephrem, as in the Ugaritic Baal cycle, Death is a person acting against Christ, as Motu fights Baal correspondingly in the Ugaritic texts. Christ is often called “(our) Lord” in Ephrem, which is also the meaning of Ugaritic Baal’s name, and the names for Death are derived from the common Semitic root, *mwt, both in Syriac and Ugaritic. Some other ancient Near Eastern mythological images have apparently found their place in Ephrem’s theology. The common origin for both Ugaritic epic tales and Ephrem’s poetic images lays in the oral traditions of the ancient Near Eastern, and more specifically in Syrian folklore. Religious folk beliefs and customs are of a conservative nature, and the same or similar concepts may reappear millennia later. A more detailed comparison can show where the ancient material is used and where there is a point of divergency that is dependent on a new application of the old material.

The best issue to begin with is the image of beneficent thunder that is found in the writings of Ephrem. The voice of Christ or God in Ephrem is often identified with that of thunder and spring storms, like the voice of Baal in Ugaritic texts. In Hymns on the Resurrection 4.10, Ephrem sings: “In You, tranquil Nisan, the Most High thunders for our hearing. In Nisan again, the Lord of thunder softened his strength with his mercy and descended and dwelt in the womb of Mary” (Buchan, p. 89). In those words we can hear the echoes of ancient spring festival in Nisan, when the Syrian thunder god Baal was celebrated as the head of the pantheon. In Hymns on the Crucifixion 7.3 Ephrem states: “And by the thunder of your Voice the flowers sprouted up, in the month of Nisan there was Nisan in Sheol” (Buchan, p. 66). The voice of Baal is similarly heard during the spring storms in the Ugaritic texts, when Baal has received his palace from Ilu, and begins to dwell there (KTU 1.4 vii 28–35):

“Baal opened a rift in the clouds; his holy voice Baal gave forth; Baal repeated the is[sue of] his lips. At his h[oly] voice the earth quaked; at the issue of his [lips] the [mountains] were afraid; the hills of the ear[th] tottered” (Wyatt 1998: 109).

Also in the Akkadian lexis, Adad’s voice is thunder (rigim Adad), and he is giver of abundance and called the epithet Bēl — “Lord” (Lambert 1985: 436). The storm god had been for millennia the principal god of Syrian city-states, and he still survives in Ephrem’s descriptions.

In his Hymns on the Resurrection 2.3, Ephrem symbolically relates the Church’s celebration of Christ’s resurrection to images of thunder, lightning and rain drawn from the experience of seasonal spring storms (Buchan, p. 65). In the Ugaritic Baal cycle, Baal appoints his season of rains after El has granted permission for his house (KTU 1.4 v 6–10): “For now Baal (can) send his rain in due season, send the season of driving showers; (can) Baal shout aloud in the clouds, shoot (his) lightning-bolts to the earth” (Pardee 1997: 260). In Ephrem’s Hymns on Nativity 3.20, Christ takes a residence in Mary’s womb as the Lord of Thunder in Nisan: “Blessed is he who took up residence in the womb and built there a temple wherein to dwell, a shrine in which to be, a garment in which He might shine out” (Buchan, p. 266). By means of
identifying the earth and Sheol with Mary’s womb, it is possible for Ephrem to enlarge the circle of his agricultural images. Mary confesses to Christ in *Hymns on Nativity* 15.1: “I am for you the earth and You are the Farmer. Sow in me Your voice, You who are the sower of Himself in His mother’s womb” (Buchan, p. 91). “Farmer” is the epithet of the Mesopotamian god Ninurta (see Annus 2002: 152–56), and the sowing voice clearly derives from the imagery of the Syrian storm-god. The mythological complex of beneficent thunder building a palace inside Mary’s womb is entirely comparable to the building of Baal’s palace in the Ugaritic cycle, which is completed exactly in the beginning of the rainy season.

Ancient storm gods Baal or Adad were still known in Late Antique Syrian cities as Bêl (see Dalley 1995). It is perhaps a paradox, but not a unexpected one, that Ephrem, who fought so ardently against paganism, did not recognize some of his own poietical images as such. He also identified, by means of metaphoric language, the birth and resurrection of the Saviour. The same image of rain announcing the resurrection of Baal is used in the Ugaritic Baal cycle, in the dream of El (KTU 1.6 iii 2–7):

“And if Mighty [Baal] is alive, if the Prince, lord of [the earth], exists (again), in a dream of the Gracious One, the kindly god, in a vision of the Creator of creatures, the heavens will rain down oil, the wadis will run with honey” (Pardee 1997: 271).

Both the resurrection of Baal and Christ bring about an overflow and abundance to nature. In Ephrem, Christ’s death and resurrection are sometimes seen as conception and rebirth, and by play of paradox, the nativity and Easter are made interchangeable (*Hymns on Nativity* 4.31–33):

“In Kanun when seed hides in the earth, the Staff of Life sprang up from the womb. In Nisan when the seed springs up into the air, the Sheaf propagated itself in the earth. In Sheol Death mowed it down and consumed it, but the Medicine of Life hidden in it burst through” (McVey 1989: 92).

This passage can be read as the example of continuity of the “agrarian mysticism” in the ancient Near East. In Babylonian mystical texts various deities, who in mythological texts were conceived of as defeated and sent to the underworld, were equated with specific types of grain. The death of Dumuzi in these texts was not only understood as a metaphor for the death of vegetation, but it was extended to apply to the ripening of corn, when the grains fall from the husk, and the vanishing of the grains into the earth as seed (see Annus 2002: 155–56). It was a common intellectual tradition of the region — a passage in the Ugaritic Baal cycle describes Anat’s punishment of Motu fully in terms of grain processing — that he is treated as corn, treshed, winnowed, burned and ground without any direct positive purpose with regard to fertility (KTU 1.6. ii 30–37). Ephrem foretells a very similar thing to Death in *Nisibene Hymns* 65.6: “There is coming a reaping, O Death, that will leave thee bare” (Buchan, p. 310). The death of Dumuzi in Mesopotamia was soon followed by his resurrection, and even Motu emerged after seven years of his treatment as ripe corn to challenge Baal again (KTU 1.6.v). In a prose work, *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, Ephrem braids the complex agricultural image on the resurrection of Lazarus by Christ in John 11: 34–35:

“His tears were like the rain, and Lazarus like a grain of wheat, and the tomb like the earth. He gave forth a cry like that of thunder, and death trembled at his voice.
Lazarus burst forth like a grain of wheat. He came forth and adored his Lord who had raised him” (Buchan, p. 144).

Elsewhere, in Hymns on Resurrection 1.3, Christ is compared to “grain of wheat” and his resurrection to the sprouting of seeds lying dormant in the earth, in conformity to John 12:24: “He poured forth dew and living rain upon Mary, the thirsty earth. Also like a grain of wheat he fell into Sheol, he ascended like a sheaf and new bread” (Buchan, p. 66, 79).

Ephrem uses paradoxes of agricultural images quite in the same way as the ancient Mesopotamian scholars. In Homily on Our Lord 9.1, he says of Christ: “You are the Living One whose killers became the sowers of your life: like a grain of wheat, they sowed it in the depths, so that it would sprout and raise many up with it” (Buchan, p. 66, 102). In the mystical texts of Mesopotamian scholars, the gods defeated in the myths are sent to the earth as various types of grain, and one text has the comment that the king representing Marduk in the ritual defeated Tiamat “with his penis.” Here the metaphor of the male organ is that of a seed plough. Comparably, the Ugaritic Motu is sown into sea after his treatment as ripe corn by Anat (see Annus 2002: 155–56). The agricultural images of sowing and sprouting are used by both Ephrem and more ancient scholars to express the mysteries of life and death — if there were no “killers” there would be no resurrection. In Ephrem’s thinking, death becomes a salvific event because it anticipates resurrection.

As the Ugaritic Motu, Death in Ephrem’s images is regarded as greedy, ravenous, hungry (kpm), and gluttonous (ggrtn’). He is an “eater of humanity,” a “devourer” and “swallower” (bl) who feeds on mortal fruit (Buchan, p. 57). Personifying metaphor is also used for Sheol, who is feminine and also described in images of hungriness — she is “hungry,” “all-consuming” (bl’t kl), “eater,” “devourer” (blcw’), “a pit that swallows and closes on all movements.” Sheol is referred to as the stomach of personified Death; within Sheol he reigns as “the king of silence.” Sheol is his throne, his stronghold, his den (Buchan, p. 57). As Shemunkasho points out (p. 107), Death is more an “eater” (‘kl), Sheol more a “devourer” (bl’).

Motu’s hungriness is also commonplace in the Ugaritic Baal cycle. When Baal sends his couriers to Motu, he warns them (KTU 1.4.viii 15–20): “But be careful, couriers of the gods: Don’t get near Mot, son of El, lest he take you as (he would) a lamb in his mouth, lest you be destroyed as (would be) a kid in his crushing jaws” (Pardee 1997: 264). Motu himself explains to Anat why he swallowed Baal (KTU 1.6. ii 15–19): “I went out myself, and searched every mountain in the midst of the earth, every hill in the midst of the steppe. My appetite felt that the want of human beings, my appetite the multitudes of the earth” (Wyatt 1998: 134). In Ephrem’s Hymns on Unleavened Bread 15, 5–6, Death swallows Christ, but later the Living One escapes, as in the Baal cycle:

“Gluttonous Death swallowed Him because He willed it. He swallowed Him then He escaped because He willed it. He hid His Life so that Death found Him (as) one dead that he might swallow the Living One” (Buchan, p. 161).

Motu’s gluttonous nature is most explicitly expressed in his address to Baal in KTU 1.5 i 15–25, where he admonishes his adversary for not having summoned him to Baal’s inauguration party:

“My appetite is the appetite of the lion in the wasteland, as the desire of the shark is in the sea; as wild bulls yearn for pools, or the hind longs for the spring.
Look, in truth does my throat devour clay, and with both my hands I devour them. My seven portions are on the plate, and Nahar has mixed my cup. For Baal did not invite me with my brothers, (nor) did Hadd summon me with my kinsmen, but he ate food with my brothers, and drank wine with my kinsmen!” (Wyatt 1998: 116–19).

Ephrem has a similar description, how gluttonous Death and Sheol learned how to fast because of the happenings in Cana’s wedding, in Carmina Nisibena 35.6. While the Saviour is having the party, Death is left empty-handed:

“Gluttonous Death lamented and said, ‘I have learned fasting which I used not to know. Behold! Jesus gathers multitudes, but to me in his feast a fast is proclaimed to me. One man has closed my mouth which closed the mouths of many.’ Sheol said, ‘I will restrain my greed; hunger therefore is mine. Behold! He triumphed at the marriage. As he changed the water into wine (John 2:9) so he changes the vesture of the dead into life’ “ (Buchan, p. 141, 176–77).

As Buchan observes (p. 174), Ephrem often describes the effect of Christ’s death and descent to Sheol as victory over four enemies of humanity: Satan, Sin, Sheol and Death. These four are variously related to one another: Satan is masculine and Sin is feminine, and they constitute one particularly synergetic and symbiotic pair. Another such pair is Death and Sheol (fem.). It is evident that these two pairs are constructed on the basis of ancient pairs of the Netherworld deities, such as Nergal and Ereškigal in the Mesopotamian pantheon. All four in Ephrem are portrayed as enemies of humanity who are defeated by Christ. This again makes the connection to Near Eastern deities who battle against forces of chaos and enemies of civilization in the conflict myths, such as Baal, Ninurta or Marduk. In Ephrem’s Hymns on Faith 82.10, Death is once symbolized as Leviathan, the monster of the deep: “In symbol and truth Leviathan is trodden down by mortals: the baptized, like divers, strip and put on oil, as a symbol of Christ they snatched you and came up: stripped, they seized the soul from its embittered mouth” (Buchan, p. 245).

The ancient Babylonian myths, which tell the stories of god’s battle against the forces of chaos (such as the Creation Epic or the Anzu Myth), have their application in the ideology of kingship (see Annus 2002). It is important to observe that Ephrem’s Jesus as the vanquisher of Death and his allies is often called “the King.” For example, in Carmina Nisibena 36.18:

“Our Living King has gone forth and gone up out of Sheol as Conqueror. Woe he has doubled to them that are of the left hand. To evil spirits and demons He is sorrow, to Satan and Death he is pain, to Sin and Sheol mourning. Joy to them that are of the right hand has come today. On this great day, therefore, great glory let us give to him who died and is alive that unto all he may give life and resurrection” (Buchan, p. 180, 309).

Death as the conquered enemy of humanity is also a penitent servant of the Lord, who vows allegiance to “Jesus King” or alternatively to the “Son of the King.” The repentance of Death signals a parting of the ways between Satan, who remains impenitent and rebellious against God, and Death, whose pride is humbled by the realization of his limitations (Buchan, pp. 182–83). In the Ugaritic Baal cycle, it is Baal’s arch-enemy and rival Motu himself who is finally the official announcer of Baal’s rule and throne. Ephrem still uses ancient Chaoskampf tradition, which as narrative had an intimate relationship with rituals of kingship (see Wyatt 2005), and
only ascribes the role of the King to Christ. For example, Ephrem depicts Death as the vanquished foe, who complains (Carmina Nisibena 39.6):

“The cross causes me to fear more exceedingly which has rent open the graves of Sheol. The crucified whom on it I slew, now by him am I slain. Not very great is his reproach who is overcome by a warrior in arms. Worse to me is my reproach than my torment that by a crucified man my strength has been overcome” (Buchan, p. 181, my emphasis).

The symbolism of the Tree of Life is also very complex in Ephrem. On the one hand, Jesus was the plant that sprouted from the earth as a flower and grew into the Tree of Life of cosmic proportions. Jesus himself is the Tree of Life, and his cross is akin to it and “the son of its stock” (Buchan, pp. 66–67). On the other hand, the Tree of Life in Genesis 3:6ff. is symbolically compared to the cross, where Christ died: “And just as one tree was the cause of death, so another Tree was the cause of life. For by one Death conquered; by one Life triumphed” (Hymns on the Church 49.8; Buchan, p. 110). Finally, the cross is the weapon by which Christ is killed and by which he kills Death: “With the very weapon that Death had used to kill Him, He gained the victory over Death” (Homily on Our Lord 3.2), with the following explanation: “Death killed natural life, but supernatural Life killed Death” (Buchan, p. 87).

The chain of symbolic associations of these three “trees” — the Tree of Life, the Cross and the Weapon used to kill Death in Ephrem’s thinking — may be an ancient one. Tree imagery in ancient Near Eastern iconography was considerably varied, and among the depictions is also the famous Baal stele from Ugarit, where the storm god holds in his hands two weapons, among them a trimmed tree or branch. It is an iconographical variant of the Syrian storm god, who usually holds in the same hand the forked lightning or tree as a weapon (Lambert 1985: 441). In Hymns on the Crucifixion 9.2, Ephrem says explicitly that Christ used wood of the cross to slay Death: “Happy are you, living wood of the cross, for you proved to be a hidden sword to Death; for with that sword which smote Him the Son slew Death, when He Himself was struck by it” (Buchan, p. 173).

Finally, the myth of Christ’s descent to the Dead and his victorious ascent shows remarkable affinities with the ancient Mesopotamian myths of Ishtar and Dumuzi. The Sumerian word kur can both mean the dark realm of Netherworld, where the goddess descends, and the realm of monsters fought against by the heroes of conflict myths. The Sumerian-Akkadian myth of Ishtar’s descent to the Netherworld, where the goddess puts on the seven items of clothing before her journey, is remarkably similar to Ephrem’s description of Christ’s incarnation, in Hymns on the Nativity 21.5:

“But let us sing the birth of the First-born — how Divinity in the womb wove herself a garment. She put it on and emerged in birth; in death she stripped it off again. Once she stripped it off; twice she put it on. When the left hand snatched it, she wrested it from her, and she placed it on the right hand” (Buchan, p. 76).

The feminine pronoun in Ephrem’s text refers to “Divinity,” grammatically feminine in Syriac. Divinity’s putting on and off the body as a garment refers to the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ (McVey 1989: 174). The symbolism of clothing is very rich in Ephrem’s theology, and it clearly derives from more ancient speculations of the Mesopotamian scholars and poets. On each of the seven gates of the Netherworld, the Mesopotamian goddess is stripped of her ornaments, equated
with the seven divine powers, from top to bottom. When she arrives at her sister Ereškigal’s throne, she is completely naked and dead. After Ishtar has spent three days in the Netherworld, her minister goes to her father Enki, who creates the two helpers so that they might sneak into the Netherworld and make the goddess alive by sprinkling the life-giving plant and water over her. In her ascent, the goddess is given back her clothing, thus making her complete and able to return to heaven. In Ephrem’s understanding, Christ in his mortal clothing enters Sheol as the conquered and pallid corpse, engages in no combat, finally breaks the gate of Sheol upon his exit, and secures Death’s allegiance while Satan still remains defiant (Buchan, p. 152).

The death of the goddess in the Mesopotamian myth anticipated her resurrection, as was also the case with Ugaritic Baal. Ephrem combined in Christ’s descent two ancient themes — descent and defeat of the hero(ine) with his or her ultimate ascent and victory over the enemy. In the following passage from Nisibene Hymns 39.21, Sheol becomes scared upon Christ’s visit like Ereshkigal in the Mesopotamian myth, whose face looses complexion upon hearing the news of her sister’s visit:

“But Sheol when her graves were rent, what saw she in Jesus? Instead of splendour He put on the paleness of the dead and made her tremble. And if His paleness when slain slew her, how shall she be able to endure when He comes to raise the dead in His Glory?” (Buchan, p. 307).

In Hymns on Virginity 12.30, Christ “fell in the contest with Death to conquer Satan and Death” (Buchan, p. 135), but his utter abasement was the source of his ascent. In Buchan’s words:

“Christ’s descent to Sheol ... is the center of the center of the mystery of redemption, the point of convergence where the downward movement of the Divine identification with humanity is carried to its most profound abasement and, rebounding against its uttermost limit, is transformed into the upward movement of the Divine regeneration of humanity” (p. 126).

As in Mesopotamian mythology, the word “earth” can mean both “our world” and the “Netherworld.” There is no big difference between “our world” without Divinity and the Netherworld; it is only the Descent of the Divinity that brings life into it. In Ephrem’s theology, the mankind after Adam’s fall is lost and perished; it is prisoner on earth, a captive in confinement. Earth is the place of suffocation and humanity is drowned in it. Earth is also “the house of darkness” (byt hšwk’), and gloom, darkness and night have taken power over it (Shemunkasho, p. 299). It is the work of Dragon and Satan, and it can only be healed by salvation brought by Christ, “who killed Death by his dying” (Hymns on Nativity 3.18; Buchan, p. 162). There is a perfect correspondence with the Mesopotamian depictions of the Netherworld, where its inhabitants are deprived of light, they eat dust and clay, and the Netherworld mistress imposes upon the fallen goddess 60 diseases. According to the myth of Ishtar’s descent, the drawback of the goddess’ release from the Netherworld is that she must give someone as her substitute, and she proceeds to Dumuzi. She gives him as her substitute but regrets his fate and begins to weep. Finally she allows his sister Geštinanna to release him by taking his place after six months. In the Ugaritic Baal cycle, the goddess Anat weeps for Baal, buries him and places him down amongst the gods of the underworld (Pardee 1997: 268). All this is in preparation of Baal’s blissful resurrection that brings life back to nature.
It is thus the descent and death of the goddess or god and his or her following resurrection that brings life to earth. Without such an intervention “our world” would be in status equal to the Netherworld. Ephrem also uses the symbolism of stripping off the clothing in speaking of the Saviour’s death. The imagery in *Hymns on Virginity* 30.12 is remarkably similar to Mesopotamian myths:

“The result of your death is full of life. You released the captives of your captivity. Your body you stripped off, my Lord, and, as you lost it, among the dead you descended and sought it. Death was amazed at you in Sheol, that you sought your garment and found (it). O wise one who lost what was found in order to find the lost” (Buchan, p. 171).

In *Hymns on Virginity* 37.5–6, there appears a thankful feminine Soul, whose stained garment was wiped clean by Christ. The soul's garment and the redemptory role of Christ are certainly reminiscent of the Mesopotamian myth of the Goddess' descent, where Dumuzi and the Goddess replace each other in the Netherworld. In addition, Ephrem also uses a motif of the Saviour being consumed by Death, which is attested in the Ugritic Baal cycle:

“Instead of our body you gave your body to that Death that consumed us but was not sated. By you alone it was sated and burst. Let the soul (fem.) thank you — that filthy thing that you wiped clean of the stains and debts she incurred by her freedom. For her whose will wove her a stained garment, the Merciful One wove a garment of light, and he clothed her” (Buchan, p. 231).

As the reviver of the dead, Christ is identified as the Medicine of Life, who entered Sheol and restored life to its dead, whereby the cold and dark womb of Sheol was loosed by the living fire (Buchan, p. 157). The term “Medicine of Life” comes from ancient Mesopotamian religion: Syrian *sam hayyē* derives from *šammu ša balātī* in Akkadian. The title Medicine of Life is related to Christ who is the Tree of Life. Besides Christ and the Tree of Life, it is used by Ephrem for Paradise’s fragrance and for other terms that represent and symbolize the Son of God (Shemunkasho, p. 147). According to *Hymns on Faith* 5.16, the heavenly Fruit is the Medicine of Life for those who are faithful and possess good deeds, such as fasting, praying and being generous towards fellow human beings; or the same Fruit can be the ‘poison of death’ (*sm mwat‘*; Shemunkasho, p. 152). Christ as the source of physical and mental well-being likens the ancient oriental king, or the god Ninurta. Medicine of Life as a royal epithet is clearly attested in an inscription of Assyrian king Adad-Narari III, where the god Assur made the king’s “shepherdship pleasing like a medicine of life to the people of Assyria” (see Annus 2002: 139). In *Homily on Our Lord* 3.3, Ephrem offers an allegorical depiction of Christ’s death and resurrection as the Medicine of Life. The description can be equally applicable to Ugaritic Baal cycle:

“So the Medicine of Life flew down from above and joined himself to that mortal fruit, the body. And when death came as usual to feed, life swallowed death instead. This is the food that hungered to eat the one who eats it. Therefore, death vomited up the many lives which it had greedily swallowed because of a single fruit which it had ravenously swallowed. The hunger that drove it after one was the undoing of the voraciousness that had driven it after many. Death succeeded in eating the one (fruit), but it quickly vomited out the many. As the one (fruit) was dying on the cross, many of the buried came forth from Sheol at (the sound of) His voice” (Buchan, p. 206).
The entire salvation history in Ephrem and other early Syrian church fathers is very often depicted in clothing symbolism. The clothing metaphors are mostly combined with descent and ascent motifs, which makes it probable that the myth of the Mesopotamian Goddess’ descent made much impact on the theology of Syrian church. The salvation history is described by the early Syrian Christian writers as consisting of four main scenes. All four scenes are rarely presented together, but there is no doubt that the entire scenario was familiar to all Christian Syriac writers during the 4th to 7th centuries. In the first scene, Adam and Eve are together in Paradise, viewed as a mountain and clothed in “robes of glory/light.” This Paradise-mountain is most probably a legacy of the Mesopotamian ziggurat, and the Goddess’ descent through the seven gates of the Netherworld was envisaged as going down through the successive steps of the ziggurat.

In the second scene the Fall takes place, and Adam and Eve are stripped of their “robes of glory/light.” In order to remedy the naked state of Adam and mankind, brought about by the Fall, in the third scene the Divinity himself “puts on Adam” when he “puts on a body,” and the whole aim of incarnation is to “reclothe mankind in the robe of glory.” The Nativity, the Baptism, the Descent or Resurrection are the three central “staging posts” of the Incarnation that are separate in profane time but intimately linked in sacred time. All three are seen as descents of the Divinity into successive wombs, the womb of Mary, the womb of the Jordan and the womb of Sheol (Brock 1992).

Ephrem saw Christ’s baptism in Jordan (<\textit{yrd} “to descend”) as an analogue of his death and descent to Sheol (Buchan, p. 97). Divinity’s descent into the Jordan is of central importance, for it is then that Christ deposits the “robe of glory/light” in the water, thus making it available to mankind for the second time to be put on in baptism. In the fourth scene the baptism of Christ is the foundation and source of Christian baptism: by descending into Jordan, Christ sanctified in sacred time all baptismal water; at Christian baptism it is the invocation to the Holy Spirit in the prayer of consecration of the water which effectually makes the water of the individual source identical in sacred time and space with the Jordan waters (Brock 1992). Baptism is the process by which the sinner’s soul is washed in Christ’s blood and reclothed in a “garment of light.” Such arrangement of the interrelated themes places the Christian sacraments and Christ’s victory over Death during his descent to Sheol in close and mutually illuminating contact (Buchan, p. 230). This complex compares favourably with the role of life-giving water in resurrecting the fallen goddess from the Netherworld in the Mesopotamian myth.

In baptismal sacrament the Christian himself goes down into the Jordan waters and thence picks up and puts on the “robe of glory” which Christ left there. Baptism is a re-entry to Paradise, but this final stage of mankind is seen as far more glorious than the primordial Paradise, and God will bestow mankind with divinity that Adam and Eve tried to assume by eating from the Tree of Life (Brock 1992: XI 11–13). It is important to note here that the descent or fall in the schemes of Syrian Church Fathers is not associated with putting on the garments, as in Genesis 3:7, but with loss of the original “robe of glory.” In Ephrem’s texts, baptism purifies the bodies and souls from filthiness, the rite “gives birth to royal sons,” in \textit{Hymns on Virginity} 7.7:
“... bodies full of stains, and they are whitened, without being beaten. They descended in debts as filthy ones and ascended pure as babes since they have baptism, another womb. (Baptism’s) giving birth rejuvenates the old just as the river rejuvenated Na’man. O to the womb that gives birth to royal sons every day without birthpangs” (McVey 1989: 294).

It is easy to see that the Mesopotamian myth of the Goddess’ Descent to the Netherworld is reworked into a Christian narrative. Ephrem effectively blends the themes and motifs used in the ancient Near East over millennia before him in formulating his Christian doctrines. There are no exact correspondencies in Ephremic images and Mesopotamian myths, but the continuity of motifs and themes is clearly discernible. For example, the rejuvenation gained from baptism may be compared to the episode in the Epic of Gilgamesh, where the hero first finds his magic plant of rejuvenation by diving into Apsu, and then loses it to a snake while swimming in a pool. The snake steals his magic plant like it does in Genesis 2, and in the interpretation of Syrian church fathers it is the “garment of glory” that is forfeited because of the snake. While the interpretation of the same motifs differs, the same themes are still used to convey the ideas about life, death and salvation.

The last quotation that I would like to present is a remarkable one that speaks about the Branch of Truth (swkt’), a feminine entity, which represents both the Tree of Life and the Church. The image that she combines in herself, in Hymns against Julian 1.2–3.8, is in toto that of the ancient Near Eastern goddess, both descending to us and ascending to above, both the lover of mankind and the conqueror of its enemies:

“If, indeed, she is mightier than Sheol, who among mortals can frighten her? Blessed is he who made her great yet has tested her that she might be greater! Reach out, indeed, your hands toward the Branch of Truth that has torn asunder the arms of warriors without being bent. She bent down from her height and came down to the contest. She tested the true, who hung on her, but those hanging with an (ulterior) motive withered and fell. Blessed is he who brought her down to go up in triumphs! ... Jesus, bend down to us your love that we may grasp this Branch that bent down her fruits for the ungrateful; they ate and were satisfied, yet they demeaned her who had bent down as far as Adam in Sheol. She ascended and lifted him up and with him returned to Eden. Blessed is he who bent her down toward us that we might seize her and ascend on her” (McVey 1989: 222–23).

References


*The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, vol. 1.
Leiden: Brill, 239–375.


Dyson’s book is about the development of classical archaeology in the 19th and 20th centuries, when classical antiquity was rediscovered. The history of classical archaeology is bound with the political events reverberated by the author, likewise the founding of museums and the acquisition of antiquities. The book comprises seven chapters, starting with the protohistory of classical archaeology in the middle of the 18th century and ending with the period after World War II.

Dyson starts with a prologue to the history of professional classical archaeology, focusing on J. J. Winckelmann’s theories about ancient art, the collecting mania that began with the Grand Tour, the start of the excavations in Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the founding of the antiquities market. Dyson characterizes this epoch as the activity of the antiquarians’ informal community.

In the first half of the 19th century, professionalism grew in classical archaeology. Additionally, the institutional form matured as evidenced by the rise of the Instituto di corrispondenza archaeologica and the archaeological schools in Rome and Athens. One of the most important changes in the 19th century was the emergence of Greece as an archaeological stage (so far little-known and rarely studied) aside Italy. Hereupon Dyson concentrates on the political events that took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the nationalism and national traditions in Europe, which played a significant role in the shaping of classical archaeology until World War I.

The major archaeological sites came through the war relatively intact, and excavations were resumed. Unlike World War I, World War II did not spare the archaeological sites and monuments, and the after-war period was politically quite complicated. Nevertheless, the excavations were continued; the Americans played a considerable role in this. Dyson also writes about one of the most important sub-disciplines of classical archaeology, underwater archaeology, which emerged after the war.

Although references to museums can be found all over the book, one separate chapter is devoted to the emergence of the great museums in Europe and America. By the end of the 18th century, some of the classical art museums had come into existence. Dyson investigates the evolution of the collections in the Munich Glyptothek (the Aegina marbles), the British Museum (the Elgin marbles), the Altes Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and others. He briefly touches upon the activity of scholars such as Gisela Richter, Sir John Beazley, the collector Lord William Hamilton, and others.

As a whole, Dyson’s work is compendious and fascinating reading material. He has fulfilled the aim to observe the growth of professionalism in classical archaeology, how the collections of museums were founded and the antiquities acquired. In addition, he investigates the theme of private collections, the market of antiquities, and government intervention in their activities. Two centuries of classical archaeology are described in the book, along with important political events in Europe that influenced the field.
Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that the book is illustrated with forty fascinating black-and-white reproductions and photos about the archaeologists and the excavations.

Entsprechend dem Buchtitel kann die Ausgabe von zwei Blickwinkeln betrachtet werden: einerseits nach dem thematischen Schwerpunkt Freundschaft, anderseits als eine Darstellung der dänischen neulateinischen Literatur. Da Freundschaft ein äußerst allgemeines Phänomen ist und die Widerspiegelung der Freundschaft durch Dichtung der Frühen Neuzeit nicht nur in der dänischen neulateinischen Literatur sondern überall in Europa als typisch gelten kann, dürfte die Wahl des Themas für die Neulatinisten und Literaturforscher verschiedener Länder und Epochen von Interesse sein.2 Von diesem Blickpunkt kann das Buch beinahe wie eine Monographie über die Freundschaft gelesen werden, in der die Aufsätze Kapitel bilden, wobei in jedem Kapitel ein Einzelaspekt der Freundschaft exemplarisch besprochen wird und Schlüsse gezogen werden. Zentral scheint mir die Folgerung des dritten Beitrages:

2 Daher kann ich mit der Kritik von Dana F. Sutton, dass "its most positive contribution is that it indicates the interest of its subject ... that there are Danish Neo-Latin poets worth reading and deserving and systematic study", nicht einverstanden sein (vgl. BMCR 2005.02.14, http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2005/2005-02-14.html).
“Everything had its proper place in the great chain of being, where each single link mirrored the whole, and where order was maintained through a subtle balance of friendship and enmity among the phenomena” (S. 35–36). Damit wird die Konzeption der Freundschaft und Feindschaft in den Kreis der anderen zentralen Ideen des Zeitalters (wie z.B. Makro- und Mikrokosmos) gehoben. Wie grundsätzlich und allumfassend das Thema Freundschaft für die Renaissance gedichtung war, demonstriert Skafte Jensen auf manche Weise: mit einem gründlichen Vergleich, wie die Freundschaft sich in der Literatur der Antike und der Renaissance spiegelt (S. 201–203); mit einer Typologie der sozialen Gruppen in der Renaissance und ihrer Freundschaftsbeziehungen in der Literatur (S. 40–42) sowie mit einer sorgfältigen Unterscheidung der Freundschaft zwischen den Männern von der Liebesbeziehung zwischen Mann und Frau (besonders im Aufsatz Humanist friendship in sixteenth-century Denmark). Wesentlich ist in dieser Hinsicht jedoch die breite Gattungswahl der analysierten Texte: es sind nicht nur Dedikationen und Epigramme aus den Alba amicorum vertreten (wie vielleicht zu erwarten), sondern auch Hochzeits-, Geburtstags- und Abschiedsgedichte, Eklogen, Grabepitaphe, poetische Briefe usw.


3 Auf die anderen Probleme, die für den Leser entstehen, der die dänische neulateinische Literatur nicht kennt, hat Dana F. Sutton in ihrer Rezension aufmerksam gemacht (s. Anm. 2).
11), viertens über Peder Hegelund (7 und 13) und zum Schluss über Zacharias Lund und Vincent Fabricius (8–9, 12) — wären systematische Gesamtportraits von den Dichtern entstanden und die dänische Literaturgeschichte stellte sich nicht als ein Komplex dichtungstheoretischer Fragen dar, sondern als Reihe der poetischen Leistungen aufgrund der lebendig beschriebenen Einzelpersonen und besonders der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen.


Zum Schluss sei auf zwei Stellen hingewiesen, an denen ich einen redaktionellen Kommentar erwartet hätte. Auf der Seite 17 sagt Skafte Jensen: “it is not possible at the present moment to say with certainty how many poems in lyric meters have been preserved, since here and there in collections of elegiac and hexametrical poems occasional attempts at using bolding forms are concealed, and only a closer examination of this comprehensive material will reveal how many poems are in-
volved.” Der Aufsatz stammt aus dem Jahre 1987. Hat die Situation sich inzwischen verändert oder gilt dies auch im Jahre 2004 (am Seitenrand steht die Bemerkung “translated”, im Vorwort S. 8 behauptet man, dass alle Aufsätze von der Autorin “revised” seien)? Was bedeutet hier also der Ausdruck “at the present moment”?

Bei der Identifizierung der Hirten in den Eklogen von Erasmus Laetus blieb Skafte Jensen im Aufsatz aus dem Jahre 1988 rätselhaft: “I shall not go into detail here about how I think this riddle should be solved, but just mention that in my view the collection of poems is, among many other things, a portrait of the reopened University of Copenhagen” (S. 63). Hat sie (oder sonst jemand) zwischen den Jahren 1988–2004 anderswo über diese Hypothese geschrieben? Wenn nicht, worin liegt dann der Grund ihrer Hypothese? Eine kurze Erklärung wäre hier leserfreundlicher gewesen.


The military history of antiquity has fascinated many researchers, which is why the compilation *The armies of classical Greece* by Everett L. Wheeler, published in the Ashgate Publishing series *The international library of essays on military history* is definitely a very useful volume for everyone engaged in studies of antiquity or military history. The book consists of 24 articles by various authors, divided into five larger sets, and an introduction by the compiler of the work. The articles cover the period from the Archaic period to the Battle of Mantinea in 362 BCE and have been written at different points of time: the volume contains articles from the beginning of the 20th century as well as from the 21st century.

In the voluminous introduction the compiler of the book provides an overview of the development of the historiography of the military history of antiquity and the newest trends, commenting on the details and bringing out the positive and negative aspects of research in the field. Wheeler discusses the most common research problems and terminology and gives a short synopsis of military development during the period described in the book, while also providing short comments on all of the articles.

The first part of the book concerns the military history of the Archaic period (750–500 BCE) and begins with the article “The hoplite reform revisited” by A. M. Snodgrass, where the author discusses the origin of the phalanx and disputes the researchers who already recognize the phalanx in the works of Homer, arguing that the development of the phalanx was a long-term process and that this process definitely lasted past the time of Homer and the time covered by his works.

The article “Ephorus and the prohibition of missiles,” by E. L. Wheeler deals with the agreement concluded between Chalkis and Eretria and reported by the 4th century BCE historian Ephorus regarding the prohibition of the use of missiles in warfare. The author concludes, however, that such an agreement probably did not exist.

In the article “The Zulus and the Spartans: A comparison of their military systems,” W. S. Ferguson compares the societies and military organization of the Zulus and the Spartans, concentrating more on the Zulus.

The article “Early Greek land warfare as symbolic expression” by W. R. Connor draws parallels between religious practices and warfare before the Greco-Persian Wars. Connor is contradicted by P. Krentz in his article “Fighting by the rules: The invention of the hoplite agon,” who claims that connections between religious rituals and warfare became apparent only during the 5th century BCE. The articles of Connor and Krentz provide excellent material for further discussion.

The second part of the book concentrates on the religious, social, economic and legal aspects of warfare. In their article “Religious scruples in ancient warfare,” M. D. Goodman and A. J. Holladay analyze the effect of the religious taboos of Greeks, Romans and Jews on warfare.
R. T. Ridley’s article “The hoplite as citizen: Athenian military institutions in their social context” discusses the military organization of Athens, trying to find answers to the following questions: How did the military system work? Was there any military training?, etc.

A thorough treatment of the effect of war on economy is provided in the article “Warfare and agriculture: The economic impact of devastation in classical Greece” by J. A. Thorne. The author analyzes the methods used in plundering raids and the extent of damage done by plundering, as well as possible countermeasures to plundering. He comes to the conclusion that regardless of opposite views presented by some researchers, plundering was a very efficient way of waging war.

In the article “Akeryktos Polemos” by J. L. Myres, the author discusses the unconventional form of warfare that could be termed “undeclared war.”

D. J. Mosley’s article “Crossing Greek frontiers under arms” deals with the rules and practices that applied when crossing the territory of a neutral state in order to reach the enemy and the rules of conduct followed in order to avoid going to war with a third country while gaining access to their territory in order to cross it.

The third part of the book, which concerns the hoplite battles of the Classical Era, begins with an article by the editor of the compilation titled “The general as hoplite,” where the author discusses and provides an overview of the role of the generals in battle and their location on the battlefield at different times and consequently also general developments in the fields of tactics and insignia.

D. Whitehead’s article “ΚΛΟΠΗ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΥ: ‘Theft’ in ancient Greek warfare” discusses the use of stratagems, the rules governing in Greek warfare and the concept of “fair victory.”

In the article “On the possibility of reconstructing Marathon and other ancient battles,” N. Whatley considers the problems that arise when historians attempt to reconstruct a battle. The author gives a brilliant overview of the different methods used and their positive and negative aspects. The second half of the article is devoted to commenting on the reconstructions of several researchers, and the author comes to the conclusion that the reconstruction of all the nuances is impossible. The methodological discussion presented in this article is especially useful.

The researchers disagree on the interpretation of the word othismos, which occurs in the sources and should mean “to shove.” Some argue that this term should be interpreted figuratively, but the traditional view holds that the hoplites pushed each other in battle and this led to the break-up and escape of one of the phalanxes. In his article “Othismos: The importance of the mass-shove in hoplite warfare,” R. D. Luginbill debates this subject, favouring the traditional view.

L. A. Trittle discusses the mutilation of enemy corpses in the wars of ancient Greece and the Vietnam War in his article “Hector’s body: Mutilation of the dead in ancient Greece and Vietnam,” and he attempts to find psychological explanations for such behaviour.

Military historians have always been interested in the number of casualties in one battle or another. In his article “Casualties in hoplite battles,” P. Krentz analyzes the data presented by various authors of antiquity regarding the number of fallen in battles and offers the average ratios of the number of fallen on both the victorious and losing armies.
The fourth part of the compilation is devoted to the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE). It begins with I. G. Spence’s article “Perikles and the defence of Attika during the Peloponnesian War,” in which the author examines the defensive strategy of Athens during the Peloponnesian War and argues that the use of mobile cavalry units against the plundering Peloponnesians was effective only until the latter established a permanent base in Attica.

The article by H. D. Westlake titled “The progress of Epiteichismos” discusses the establishment of military bases on enemy territory and is thus connected with the previous piece. The author provides an overview of how the practice originally used in civil wars came to be used in wars fought between states, how long it was used effectively and how the term epiteichismos acquired a much broader meaning over time.

In his article “Thucydides and Spartan strategy in the Archidamian War,” T. Kelley points out that the data provided by Thucydides on Spartan strategy that concentrates solely on land operations must be reviewed and that naval operations were very important to at least a certain faction among the Spartans. Furthermore, on several occasions Spartan land and naval operations were synchronized, thus complementing each other.

One of the favourite military leaders of Thucydides in the Peloponnesian War was the Spartan Brasidas. G. Wylie’s article “ Brasidas — great commander or whiz-kid?” gives a picture of the life and activities of Brasidas and also contemplates whether Brasidas was in fact a genius on the battlefield or if some of his fame can be attributed to the sympathy Thukydides felt for him.

The fifth part of the book is dedicated to the time of Xenophon and Epameinondas. Xenophon is known as a historian and soldier. In the article “Xenophon’s theory of leadership,” N. Wood also points out Xenophon’s widely overlooked talents as a military, social and economic theoretician. Xenophon’s ideas are compared to other thinkers of his time and his thoughts on leadership are also discussed.

Greeks were also highly valued mercenaries. Who became mercenaries, how they were recruited, what was their everyday life like, what kind of social stratification existed among the mercenaries and what shaped the identity of mercenaries are discussed by M. F. Trundle. In his article “Identity and community among Greek mercenaries in the Classical world: 700–322 BCE,” he points out that while Greek mercenaries often fought other Greeks, their national identity was an important connecting factor between men from various areas of Greece.

According to common theory, scythed chariots were first adopted in India. A. K. Nefiodkin presents convincing arguments in his article “On the origin of the scythed chariots” regarding the original adoption of these chariots not by Indians but by Persians during the 5th century BCE specifically in order to scatter the compact formation of the Greek phalanx.

The article by V. Hanson titled “Epameinondas, the Battle of Leuktra (371 B.C.), and the ‘revolution’ in Greek battle tactics” challenges the position of Epameinondas as the great tactical innovator in Greek warfare. The author brings many examples of the innovations attributed to Epameinondas, such as the use of a greater number of lines in the phalanx, the positioning of stronger units on the left flank instead of the traditional right flank, etc., being employed by earlier generals. Hanson is of the opinion that the myth of Epameinondas is largely the result of later authors sympathetic to Thebes.
All in all, the compilation comprises valuable material and its articles are interesting and contribute to the objective set by the compiler in the introduction, providing many opportunities for discussion by contradicting traditional ideas and at times presenting two contrasting views within the book itself. The selection of articles also provides a good overview of the development and different aspects of the Greek military system. The book gives different opinions about the development of the Greek ritualized warfare — the agon. We also get a picture of the development of battle tactics (how light troops became more and more important in warfare) and strategy (occupying part of other city states’ land and establishing a stronghold there was not part of Greek warfare until the Peloponnesian War). Thanks to several articles one can get a pretty good overview of differences and similarities in, for example, Spartan and Athenian military systems, and some unconventional opinions are introduced (see for example T. Kelly’s article). The introduction in itself gives a very good survey of warfare in Greece and the circumstances related to its study.

One potential fault in the volume might be the distribution of the articles between the five parts of the book, which is to say that an article or two might have fit more in some other part of the book (e.g. the article on mercenaries by M. F. Trundle which would have been more suited for the second part). This criticism is, however, rather insignificant.

The book is bound in hard covers, the print and paper quality are good, but the articles are in different formats, as it seems that the works used have been printed on the basis of unaltered PDF-scans. This does not affect the legibility of the volume and the quality of the contents, of course.
This collection of articles consists of a memoir, where Tomas Hägg gives an overview about his research topics in the field of Greek literature and language, 16 articles dealing with different aspects of ancient Greek fiction, and seven reviews of books related to this subject.

Under the section *A Hellenistic Philosophical Novel*, the *Life of Aesop* as a contemporary confirmation of conventional values of the fourth century BC and of the early imperial period is discussed, especially the part of Aesop as a slave of a philosopher, Xanthus. An interesting conclusion is that Xanthus’ favourable attitude toward women may reflect the common mentality in the Hellenistic world, because Xanthus and his wife do not conform to the literary-conventional roles played by the philosopher and his wife, and their affectionate feelings toward each other are not necessary for the plot. The parody of intellectuals and philosophers may reflect the opinion of ordinary people about the subjects of deliberation among philosophers or sophists. Hägg also proposes that this part of the *Life* must have been written by an educated man probably to the more simple-minded audience, but not necessarily for slaves. For a person less acquainted with this work, it was quite interesting to learn about the composition of the book — which parts can be ascribed as legendary material, which parts have been added later, which literary examples have been used (e.g. the Assyrian *Book of Ahiqar*, New Comedy), etc.

Chariton’s *Callirhoe* as an early ideal novel is examined from four different points of view. First, Hägg discusses the historicity of the novel. As there is still no “authoritative definition” of the term *historical novel*, he offers his own definition: The typical historical novel “is set in a period at least one or two generations anterior to that of the author, communicating a sense of the past as past; it is centered on fictitious characters, but puts on stage as well, mingling with these, one or several figures known from history; enacted in a realistic geographical setting, it describes the effects upon the fortunes of the characters of (a succession of) real historical events; it is — or gives the impression of being — true, as far as the historical framework is concerned” (p. 81). Trying to fit several ancient works into this definition, he finds that Chariton’s *Callirhoe* and the romance of *Parthenope* are the best candidates. Analyzing other “ideal novels,” Hägg concludes that only Heliodorus’ *Aithiopica* seeks the historical probability but cannot be called “historical”.

One of the most interesting articles in this collection concerns orality, literacy, and readership of the early Greek novels. In Hägg’s opinion, the ideal Greek novel is a typical product of a literate society. On the basis of the works by Xenophon of Ephesus and Chariton, he infers that the authors must have known other authors, quoting and imitating their style as if writing with another book in front of them. As for the readership, Hägg seems to concur with B. E. Perry’s opinion that the novel in late Hellenism filled the place of mystery cults and moral philosophy within the literary system. The readers for this new genre should be searched from the clergy-men and tradesmen, the *nouveaux riches*, and particularly among the literate women of
Hägg discusses in length the possibilities that the novels were actually meant for broader audience than those who could read (i.e. for lower social classes for reading out loud). Chariton could have had several audiences in mind, as the novel could have been enjoyed both by highly literate readers and by illiterate listeners. Analyzing evidence of the actual readership (references in other authors, papyrus fragments, role of the heroines in novels, the narrative technique), Hägg shows the probability of male as well as female readership and supports the fact that novels also were delivered orally.

Two other articles on Chariton’s novel concern different ways of introducing characters into action and the usage, role, and interpretation of epiphany in Greek novels, especially in Chariton’s Callirhoe — these are used mainly to bring out the divine beauty of heroines (as already in Homeric epics), or to anticipate the future events; the heroines are believed to be goddesses mainly by people belonging to the lower social classes.

In the first article about the Ephesiaca of Xenophon Ephesius, Hägg quite convincingly confutes most of the arguments brought by K. Bürger in favour of the hypothesis that the extant novel is really an epitome — a shortened version of the original work. He gives explanations of his own for the peculiarities of the narrative style of Xenophon and the division into books. He also discusses the possibilities of abbreviation in other ancient fictitious texts / texts of ancient popular fiction.

In the second article of this section, Hägg has researched at length the possible background of naming the characters in Xenophon’s novel. Most of the names used in this novel are uncommon or even non-existent in the epigraphical material and are supposedly used rather to describe persons by appearance or character (except for the most frequently used names, which might have lost the etymological meaning and are used because they were near at hand). It seems that Xenophon took no mythological or historical figures as an example for his names; only the name of a physician, Eudoxos, could have been taken over from a real historical physician. Xenophon’s names are not unrealistic, though — all his names were used in daily life (some of them as geographical names!). Only the most important characters have a significant name; other names seem to have been chosen quite randomly, probably for the purpose to make the impression of realism upon the audience.

In the fourth part of the collection, Hägg discusses the Parthenope Romance and the oriental reception of the ideal novel. First, he compares some of the Christian martyrdoms with Greek novels, concluding that they have similar motifs especially with the early non-sophistic novels (like Chariton’s). More thoroughly he analyzes the Coptic martyr story about a young maiden Parthenope (Bartānūbā in Arabic) and the remains of an early novel called Parthenope and Metiochus (or Parthenope Romance). There seem to be great similarities between those two stories (starting with the name of the heroine), which indicate that the author of the Parthenope martyrdom had this particular Greek novel before his eyes.

The next two articles are related to an 11th-century Persian verse-romance Vamiq and ‘Adharā. Hägg deliberates over the possibilities of reconstructing part of the Parthenope Romance (next to historical facts) after a scene in the Persian version, concluding that we may get information about the content and events of the original Greek romance, but we cannot get any help restoring the text word-by-word. The Persian verse-romance Vamiq and ‘Adharā also indicates the possible translations of
the Parthenope Romance — it appeared in Persian after Pahlavi and Arabic, maybe also Syriac versions (as most of the Greek literature passed into Arabic through Syriac versions). It is possible that the Persian version is also an adaptation of the above-mentioned Christian martyrdom. The influence of Greek novels (regarding narrative pattern, topics, style, rhetorical devices), particularly the early non-sophistic novels, can be seen for instance also in the Arabian Nights.

The last article of this section compares the traditional version of the myth about Hermes as the inventor of the lyre (as in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes) and the version in the Vāmiq and ‘Adharā. The latter version differs from the “orthodox” one, although following it quite closely, in three aspects: Hermes is depicted as a grown-up; he finds a dead tortoise or its shell with sinews (instead of killing or sacrificing it); and he gets help from a mortal. This version seems more logical, and Hägg suggests it may have been older than the one in the Hymn, which tries to combine two myths, the story of the birth of Hermes and the invention of the lyre.

The collection also contains an article on the Aithiopica of Heliodorus, where Hägg has analyzed the description of Meroe (what we today call Nubia, contemporary Sudan) in the novel, discussing the reflection of reality (although Heliodorus has filled most of the novel with fictitious descriptions, he finds traces of some of the customs and historical facts known about this region) and trying to detect the literary and historical sources of the author.

The last section of articles deals with the afterlife of Philostratos’ work Life of Apollonios of Tyana. First, Hägg examines the different uses of Apollonios, a Pythagorean sage, in the work of Philostratos and in the lost pamphlet of Sossianus Hierocles, who was one of the leaders of the “Great Persecution” of Christians in the 4th-century Roman Empire. Hierocles elevated Apollonios to the status of counter-Christ, providing an example for posterity.

In the second article in this part, Hägg discusses the work Contra Hieroclem (i.e. against Sossianus Hierocles mentioned above) ascribed to Eusebios. He deliberates over the title of the work and, after viewing the problems with date and style, proposes the possibility that it is actually not Eusebios’ work at all.

The third article takes The Life of Apollonios as a proof of Photius’ working style while composing Bibliotheca. Hägg reaches the plausible conclusion that although Photius wrote the summaries of other works relying to his memory, he could not have given the exact stylistic examples from memory but rather copied them directly from another book.

The final article reveals four pages of Richard Bentley’s unfinished edition of Apollonius and discusses why he left it unpublished.

This collection of articles is an excellent example of the great contribution Tomas Hägg has made to the studies of Greek literature and language (also seen from the long list of publications given at the end of his Memoir). He is a good example of a classical scholar who has not confined himself with the primary interest in the narrative technique of Greek novels, but has had volition to also investigate other branches of classical studies. Hence, he has been able to discuss thoroughly the ancient Greek fiction from so many different aspects in articles filled with thoroughly considered and logically reasoned arguments.
Anybody writing on Early Sparta, defined in this volume as the period in the Spartan history from the Dark Age to the end of the Archaic era, must inevitably find some answer to the questions of the course and the date of the formation of Spartan social and political order. Resolving this crucial question is almost synonymous to understanding Spartan social development, and it seems scarcely possible to consider any point in the Spartan early history without assuming or suggesting an answer to it. The ancients indeed ascribed the foundation of Spartan order to the famous lawgiver Lykourgos and were unanimous in dating his legislation to a very early period, certainly before the conquest of Messenia in what we call the late 8th to late 7th century. The moderns, generally not believing either the reality of Lykourgos or the historicity of Spartan legislation as a single act, must find their own solutions, building on extremely tenuous evidence. The bulk of the tradition on early Sparta, as known from much later sources, is usually regarded as untrustworthy, which means that the scholars are left basically with only the Archaic poetry, the archaeological data, the evidence for the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Sparta, and the ability to deduce from comparison with what is known or assumed about the general developments in Archaic Greece. Since this evidence is not likely to give definite solutions, the opinions of the moderns inevitably diverge. This is true also of the well-known, mostly German-speaking scholars contributing to this volume. All of them have indeed already left their trace in the study of Spartan history.¹

The importance of the question of dating the emergence of Spartan social and political order in the scholarly discussion is well pointed out by Lukas Thommen in his short introduction to this volume (Einleitung: Überlegungen zum frühen Sparta), where he gives a concise overview of the most important writings on the Early Sparta. He also lists the proposed solutions for the dating that range from the 8th to the 5th century B.C., the latter put forward in the recent years, not least by Thommen himself.

Thommen thereafter inaugurates the discussion of particular topics by considering the evidence for the territorial scope of the Archaic Spartan state (Das Territorium des frühen Sparta in Mythos, Epos und Forschung). He takes into account the vision of the Spartan conquests in Laconia and Messenia given by the later authors, especially the perieget Pausanias, but gives more space to the information that could be extracted from the myth, Spartan mythological genealogy and the heroic epic. Following the influential opinions of Friedrich Prinze and Claude Calame, Thommen dates the emergence of the tradition about the Dorian migration to the late 7th century, rejecting it thus as a reliable evidence for reconstructing Spartan earlier history, and views the development of the mythic and heroic genealogy, which supposedly took shape by the end of the Archaic era, as an ideological tool by which the Spartans integrated their past into a pan-Hellenic context and justified their dominant position of their present time by forging connections with the heroic legend. Perhaps the greatest weight is placed by Thommen on the evidence of the Homeric epics, particularly the Catalogue of Ships and the seven cities promised by Agamemnon to Achilles for reconciliation (Il. 9.150–153). Thommen takes this as a faithful description of the 8th century circumstances, glossing over the controversial problems of the dating and the interpretation of the evidence of the poems in general and the Catalogue in particular (the other writers in this volume follow the same assumption), seeing here a contemporary testimony for the Spartans’ claim for territories in Messenia in the 8th century. Somewhat surprisingly, he leaves almost out of attention the well-known verses of Tyrtaios about the Messenian wars. He concludes by stating that the later accounts basically only embellish the evidence of the epics, which allows the description of Spartan expansion in Peloponnese and state formation in Laconia in only very general lines.

In the following chapter (Überlegungen zur frühen Helotie in Lakonien) Karl-Wilhelm Welwei defends the traditional concept (both ancient and modern) of the emergence of the Laconian helotry in result of the conquest of the district by the Spartans, arguing against the recent proposals of Nino Luraghi and Nikos Birgalias to view the helots in Laconia partly as the impoverished Spartans comparable to the Athenian dependants before Solon, and partly as chattel slaves settled by their masters on the south Laconian soil for toiling it. Welwei dismisses the adequacy of comparison to the Athenian hektemoroi, pointing out that the latter were, differently from the Laconian helots, members of the political community. He assumes the evidence of Homeric epics as a guide for the social relations of early Sparta and suggests that stimulus for the conquest of the sparsely populated southern Laconia was given by the need for providing the (Homeric) elite warriors with land parcels. He also points out that Tyrtaios’ verses (fr. 5 Gentili/Prato) reveal a clear idea of the relations between masters and serfs, which is likely to have been derived from the private dependen-

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cies already built up in Laconia. The helot status, based on the conquest, was consequentl
already well established in Laconia by the time of Tyrtaios in the late 7th
century when the Messenians were subjected as helots by a common effort of the
Spartans in the course of the second Messenian war.

Martin Dreher (Die Primitivität der frühen Spartanischen Verfassung) states as his
purpose emphasising the traditional nature of the Spartan political institutions, the
formation of which he dates to the period from 750 to 650 B.C. He discusses in length
Tyrtaios’ Eunomia and the text of the Great Rhetra, viewing them as reflections of the
same oracle. Dreher’s main thesis is that line 9 of Eunomia (demou de plethei niken kai
kartos hepesthai) and Rhetra’s last clause (gamodangerianumen kai kratos) render the same
message, which is not the statement of the powers of the popular assembly, as often
(in the case of the Rhetra almost invariably) thought, but a pronouncement of the
might of the community as a whole, which will be achieved in the case of ordering
the community in the way prescribed in the preceding parts of Rhetra and Eunomia.
Dreher views the Rhetra in the light of the evidence of the Homeric epics and inter-
prets it as a ‘manifest of state formation’ (Staatsgründungsmanifest) which confirmed
the aristocratic order functioning approximately as depicted by Homer. Rhetra is for
Dreher an enactment of gerousia, which was definitely not intending to establish the
popular assembly’s right of making political decisions, something considered by
Dreher as inconceivable in a ‘Homeric’ society, but prescribed the main political in-
stitutions of the community and established the number of gerontes, but left the exact
duties of the governmental bodies unspecified, thus presumably preserving the ac-
cepted practices, and therefore left the state functioning in a traditionally ‘Homeric’
way. The so-called rider of the Rhetra, which allowed the elders to dismiss the as-
sembly, is viewed as a complementary safeguard of the aristocratic system: it was
formulated against people’s turbulent acclamations, such as depicted in the Iliad’s
Thersites-episode.

The contribution of Alberto Maffi (Recht und Rechtsprechung in Sparta) exam-
ines the sparse evidence for litigation in the Classical Sparta, assuming that this did
not undergo essential changes during this period, and asks how the Spartan institu-
tions could function without the written law. Basing on Aristotle Pol. 1275b9ff he
states that different cases in Sparta were judged by different officials, and argues that
Spartan judges had, differently from what was normal in Athens, the right and duty
to act also as prosecutors. Comparing the evidence of Platon’s Nomoi 855 and the
Vatican palimpsest (Vat. Gr. 2306) containing a somewhat cryptic comment on a court
case concerning Spartan Pausanias, Maffi suggests that in the Spartan courts the
process of examination/interrogation (anakrisis) was conducted by the judges as a
part of the main trial and did not constitute a separate preliminary procedural stage
as was the case in Athens. In Sparta the judges had, consequently, more initiative and
rights than in Athens. Maffi also discusses the evidence of Spartan trials involving
the citizens of other states and finds here, particularly in the judgement of the Pla-
taions after the surrender of their city during the Peloponnesian war described by
Thucydides (3.52), the confirmation for the importance of anakrisis and the active role
of judges in the Spartan courts.

In the next chapter (Der Name der Volksversammlung in Sparta), Andreas Luther
questions the opinion according to which the Spartan assemblies were officially known
as apellai — a word denoting above all the festivities in honour of Apollon. Against
this widely held assumption, based above all on the term *apellazein* used for marking the periodical gatherings of the people in the Great Rhetra, Luther lists all the relevant evidence, making clear that the sources of the Classical period, especially Thucydides and Xenophon, mostly called Sartan assembly *ekklesia* (or labelled the holding of assemblies *ekklesiazzein*). He concludes that *ekklesia* must have been the official term for the assemblies in Sparta. This conclusion has, for Luther, important implications for the interpretation of the Great Rhetra. He views its prescription *horas ex horas appellazein* (from time to time to hold *appellai*) as indicative for the yearly, not monthly, occurrence of *appellai*, as was natural for a religious festival. Following Hesychios’ statement about *appellai* as *archairesiai* (the occasions for electing the magistrates), Luther suggests that what the Rhetra really prescribed when stating, in a political context, the regularity of *appellai*, was the annual election of the ephors by the people taking part in the gatherings during these festivities. This is an undoubtedly original reading of the evidence, which, if accepted, will confirm that ephorate was an original part of the ‘Lukourgan’ *kosmos*, not a later addition as suggested by the dominant tradition. The thesis is also well in line with Luther’s scepticism about the traditional view of Rhetra’s establishment, expressed in his *Königen und Ephoren*. In this light Luther’s silent rejection of the evidence of Aristotle’s commentary on Rheta evokes no surprise.

Winfried Schmitz (*Die Macht über die Schprache. Kommunikation, Politik und die soziale Ordnung in Sparta*) starts with the recognition that the forms of communication in a society are likely to be informative about the social order, and states as his purpose to explore the way the characteristically short-cut ‘Laconic speech’ can inform us about the Spartan state and society. He connects the Spartans’ well-known preference for brevity of discourse and distaste for long speeches and open discussion with the emphasis the Spartans laid on the obedience and discipline, as well as with the state control of the citizens’ education and way of life, and considered all this as resulting from the radical reorganisation of society after the conquest of Messenia in the 7th century. For resolving the question of the reliability of our often late sources, including Plutarch’s collection of sayings (*apophtegmata*) which provide the best evidence for the ‘Laconian’ brevity, Schmitz turns to the data of Herodotos and Thucydides. He demonstrates that for these writers the ‘Laconian’ characteristics of the Spartans were well known, and must have been therefore familiar for the Greeks in the 5th century. The Spartan brevity was therefore, according to Schmitz, a historical reality from early on, not only a part of the later ‘Myth of Sparta.’ Schmitz considers this evidence of Herodotos and Thucydides as a demonstration of the fact that by the 5th century the radical reorganisation of Spartan society was already complete.

The question of when did the Spartan social order arise, touched already in the previous contributions, finds the most direct treatment in the chapter by Mischa Meier (*Wann entstand das Homoios-Ideal in Sparta*?). Meier contests Lukas Thommen’s opinion that the ideal of the equality of the Spartans was developed in the 5th century in response to the integration of the Laconian perioics into the Spartan army, which had made necessary to distinguish the Spartans as a group of *homoioi* (equals/similar) from the rest of the Lacedaimonians as not equals to them. Meier argues that the assumption of the Spartans as *homoioi* is implicit already in some passages of

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4 Thommen, *Lakedaimonion politeia* (see n. 1), 135–137.
Herodotos, and follows Stephan Link in pointing out that the term *homoioi*, emphasising equality, is not likely to have been conceived for distinguishing the ruling group from the perioics as outsiders.\(^5\) Nor was the term used for stating a social or an economic equality. Instead, it emphasised the equality in military bravery, which is well in line with Tyrtaios’ call for everybody’s excellence in the common fighting for homeland. It is therefore likely, according to Meier, that the decisive impact for the formation of the *homoios*-ideal was given by the second Messenian war: the reduction of the Messenians into the status of helots created a danger which demanded the mobilisation of all physical, material and ideological resources for the control of Messenia and led to the reorganisation of Sparta into a community of militarily equal leisure-class warriors.

Hans van Wees (*The Oath of the Sworn Bands*. The Acharnae Stela, the Oath of Plataea and Archaic Spartan Warfare) discusses the so-called Oath of Plataea, as presented on the 4th-century Attic inscription from Acharnae, and its implications for reconstructing the early 5th century Spartan military organisation. Van Wees considers the inscription’s mentioning of *taxiarchoi* and *enomotarchoi*, its emphasise on freedom, and the pledge to bury the fallen on the spot as particularly Spartan features, which allow us to regard the lines 23–31 as representing an old Spartan oath imposed by the Spartans to their allies as a part of the common oath at the time of the Persian invasion (the pledge to follow the *hegemones* — i.e. the Spartans — and to obey the *strategoi* in lines 27–29 are interpreted as added to the original Spartan oath specifically for the allies). Thus, according to Van Wees the Acharnai-inscription records the very oath sworn by the allied Greek forces, either in 480/1 when the alliance was formed, or in 479 immediately before the battle of Plataia. Van Wees makes a clear distinction between the authentic text of this oath transmitted by the inscription, and the secondary Athenian propagandistic elaboration adding the pledge not to rebuild the sanctuaries burnt or demolished by the barbarians, given in some literary sources (Lykurgos and Diodoros) and rightly dismissed as a forgery by Theopompos. This conclusion allows Van Wees to use the lines 23–31 of the inscription as an authentic source for the early Spartan warfare: they show that the Spartan army of the Persian wars had only two level of units, the sworn band (*enomotia*) and the larger unit commanded by the taxiarch, which implies a change of the military organisation after the Persian wars, when the so-called ‘fiftieth’ (*pentekontys*) was inserted. It also testifies about the formal equality in the life-stile of the Spartans, insofar as burial of fallen on the battlefield ensured equal glory in death. It also shows that at this time the fighting to the death was a sworn commitment of the Spartans, differently from what appeared in Tyrtaios who recommended it simply as better than a shameful life. In a comparatively extensive appendix Van Wees explains the ‘Pitanate lochos’ in Herodotos (9.3.2) as a too straightforward understanding of the metaphoric use of ‘Pitana’ to mean ‘Sparta’ or even ‘Greece,’ and proposes an explanation for the names of the five Spartan *lochoi* given in Schol. Aristoph. Lys. 453.

The paper by Ernst Baltrusch (*Polis und Gastfreundschaft: die Grundlagen der spartanischen Aussenpolitik*) explores the development of the Spartan foreign policy in the light of Gabriel Herman’s concept of city framework superimposing itself on pre-

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existing network of ties of guest-friendship in the Greek poleis. Baltrusch accepts Andreas Luther’s position that the formation of the Spartan inner order was completed by ca 550, and observes a corresponding change towards ‘isolationism’ in the external affairs. This new policy of refusal to intervene outside Europe (for example, to support the Ionian revolt), complemented by a strict observation of Spartan interests in the Peloponnese and its outskirts (intervention in Athens and Aigina), was, according to Baltrusch, brought about by King Kleomenes (Baltrusch speaks of ‘Kleomenes-doctrine’) in the turn of the 6th and 5th centuries. At the same time the Spartans assumed the policy of xenelasia (keeping foreigners out), and submitted the old ties of guest-friendship to a strict state control by appointing themselves their proxenoi in the other poleis, differently of the common Greek practice according to which the proxenoi were named by the polis of their residence. This doctrine of isolationism, which asserted itself despite internal discussion and opposition (exemplified by the deviant actions of Dorieus, Demaratos and Pausanias), was, according to Baltrusch, followed almost throughout the whole of the 5th century and abandoned only under the pressure of the Peloponnesian war.

The last chapter by Stefan Berenich (Leonidas und die Thermopylen. Zum Sparta-Bild in der deutschen Altertumswissenschaft) takes the Thermopylan heroism of Leonidas and his 300 Spartiates as a paradigmatic case for following the changes in the vision of Sparta in the German history-writing from 18th to 20th century. Berenich focuses especially on the idealisation of the Spartan common education, birth-selection, self-restriction in behalf of the state, military spirit, heroism, etc. as a paradigm for the totalitarianism and militarism of the Nazi state, discussing in some length Helmut Berve’s part in this process. At the same time, he points out that this idealised vision of Sparta was by no means the creation of the 1930es, but composed as a complex amalgam of the ideas and ideologies which were shared by many, if not most, of the prominent German intellectuals and historians of two previous centuries.

Thus, the contributions in this book cover a wide range of subjects, including its external and internal affairs, its society and customs, politics, law and military organisation, ending up with Sparta’s impact for the modern ideology. However, the editors have not stated the aim of exhaustiveness, and a comprehensive view of the early Sparta is indeed not expected from a volume by the writers who have predictably different opinions about some crucial questions of the Spartan history. Nor is explicit criticism of each other’s views avoided (note Dreher’s comments on Luther’s views, p. 45; Meier’s argument against Thommen). There are obvious gaps: nothing about Spartan archaeology or choral poetry, which is somewhat regrettable given that these are, besides Tyrtaios and the Rhetra, the only contemporary sources for the Archaic Sparta. Maffi’s contribution, on the other hand, has apparently little to do with the ‘Early Sparta’ if this term is understood as indicating the period before the Persian wars (the reason of Maffi’s focusing in the Classical period is obvious: we have no evidence about the Spartan court practice before this time). But all this is not to be considered as serious shortcoming. The papers make valuable contribution to many points of ongoing discussion, either restating the traditional positions or offering fresh solutions for old problems, which makes the book a useful reading for both the specialists and the students (presumably above all on the postgraduate level).

However, through different ways the writers in this volume tend to come to the conclusion that the essential characteristics of the Spartan order must have been
well established by the time of the Persian invasion at the latest. Thommen traces Spartan pretensions for Messenia in Homer, and dates the formation of the ‘national’ mythology to the 6th century. Welwei points out the importance of the Messenian conquest for the emergence of Spartan communal ethos, Dreher assumes the dating of the formation of Spartan political institutions to the period from 750 to 650 BC, Schmitz connects the formation of the social order leading to the development of the ‘Laconic’ brevity in the Spartans’ speech with the 7th century conquest of Messenia, Meier views the same event as the reason of the emergence of the Spartans concern for their military equality, Van Wees finds traces of characteristically ‘Spartan’ military ethos in the oath dating from the time of the Persian wars, and Baltrusch observes a change in the Spartan foreign policy during the late 6th and early 5th century, connected to the formation of the internal order. Consequently, the volume as a whole suggests that it was the Archaic, not Classical, era that was crucial for the formation of the ‘Lykourgan Sparta’, and thus turns out as a statement against the recent 5th century dating of the formation of the ‘Lykourgan’ order. Three of the contributors (Welwei, Schmitz and Meier) explicitly point out the importance of the definite subjugation of Messenia in the 7th century as the decisive moment in the Spartan history, what would place the subsequent formation of what may be called Lykourgan Sparta into the 6th century. All this converges to a great extent with the opinions which have been widely accepted during the recent decades. Thus, despite Luther’s novel interpretation of the significance of Great Rhetra, the volume confirms, reasonably I think, what has become a rather traditional reading of the history of Archaic Sparta.

* Compare, for example, with Cartledge, P., Sparta and Laconia. A regional history 1300–362 BC, London/Boston/Henley 1979, Chapter 9, 131–159.