

ARCHIVAL PRACTICES IN ANCIENT GREECE

BOFFO (L.), FARAGUNA (M.) *Le poleis e i loro archivi. Studi su pratiche documentarie, istituzioni e società nell'antichità greca.* (Graeca Tergestina. Storia e Civiltà 6.) Pp. xxiv + 964. Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2021. Paper, €35. ISBN: 978-88-5511-253-6.

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In the debate about the role of writing in ancient Greek society and politics the function of archives is a topic of major importance. If one believes that writing was not important in the Greek *polis*, one has to argue that archives were chaotic and ineffective. On the other hand, if archives were numerous and often used to store and retrieve documents, this changes our views of writing and literacy in the *polis*. The book is divided into two main parts. The first covers the Archaic and the classical periods by Faraguna, and the second the Hellenistic period by Boffo.

F. starts by reviewing the kinds of materials on which the Greeks wrote and speculates about influence from the Near East (pp. 61–8). F. examines the evidence for dating by eponymous magistrates from the seventh and sixth centuries BCE on Crete (pp. 71–2), Tanagra (p. 73), Argos (pp. 74–5), Elis (pp. 75–6), Aegina (pp. 76–7), Thasos (pp. 78–81), Miletus (pp. 81–4), Sparta (pp. 85–90) and Athens (pp. 90–8), which presupposes the existence of lists of such officials continuously maintained, the precursor of more extensive record-keeping (pp. 98–9). F. next reviews the evidence for the preservation of laws and the nature of the collections of laws. The main evidence comes from Athens, Miletus and especially Gortyn (pp. 101–32). F. believes that for the revision of Athenian laws between 410/9 and 400/399 BCE, the *anagrapheis* found copies of laws in the archives of officials (pp. 103–8). Following A. Herda, he thinks that the sacred regulations of the Molpoi at Miletus go back to texts of the late sixth century BCE, which were often revised and emended (pp. 114–16). Because of the careful and coherent organisation of the laws of Gortyn, F. argues that they were not just a collection but also a codification designed for easy consultation by the general public (pp. 116–32). From the late sixth century BCE onwards public scribes are attested in several *poleis* (pp. 133–50). F. rightly rejects the views of J. Whitley about Cretan literacy (p. 139 n. 30) and plausibly argues that the task of Spensithios the *poinkastas* was not to memorise information but to write it down (p. 141). The earliest lists of citizens are found in the early sixth century, when the four Solonian property classes at Athens and the three tribes at Cyrene would have required recording the names of members (pp. 151–77). F. rightly doubts the implausible views of A. Duplouy about ‘performing citizenship’ (p. 155 n. 20). Another type of document kept by officials were financial records (pp. 177–92). There are early examples from Ephesus, Cyzicus, Rhamnous, Ikarion, Naupaktos and Corcyra. In several cases there is an attempt to balance revenues and expenditures (p. 186). Athens and other *poleis* inscribed numerous decrees on stone but also kept copies on perishable material in archives (pp. 193–237). Like the majority of scholars, F. recognises that the evidence against the authenticity of the documents in Andocides’ *On the Mysteries* is overwhelming (pp. 207–8). F. devotes several pages to the document found at [Plutarch], *Moralia* 833d–834b, which he arbitrarily assigns to Craterus, but this has now been shown to be a forgery. See E.M. Harris, ‘The Work of Craterus and the Documents in the Attic Orators and in the “Lives of the Ten Orators”’, *Klio* 103 (2021), 463–504, at 465–74.

Written documents and inventories played a major role in keeping magistrates accountable (Aeschin. 3.75) and in protecting citizens from unjust prosecution (pp. 237–64). F. concentrates on classical Athens because P. Fröhlich, *Les cités grecques et le contrôle des magistrats (IV^e–I^{er} siècle avant J.-C.)* (2004), has brilliantly covered this topic for other Greek *poleis*. In the analysis of the role of archives in Athenian trials (pp. 265–92) F. correctly challenges the view of M. Gagarin, *Writing Greek Law* (2008), pp. 188–209, 242–4, that written texts did not play a large role, but concentrates mainly on the role of the complaint and has little to say about other kinds of documents. Readers will want to consult the more complete discussion of C. Pébarthe, *Cité, démocratie et écriture. Histoire de l’alphabétisation d’Athènes à l’époque classique* (2006), pp. 315–30. F. (pp. 286–9) rightly rejects the view of A. Lanni, ‘The Role of the Complaint in the Athenian Legal System’, in: G. Thür, U. Yiftach, R. Zelnick-Abramovitz (edd.), *Symposium 2017* (2018), pp. 198–9, that the Athenians did not keep indictments (*engkleмата*) on file in the Metroon with good analysis of the evidence.

The excellent section on records about the ownership and sale of land draws on F.’s path-breaking studies of this subject (pp. 293–367). Here F. enlarges the horizon to cover *poleis* outside Athens and rightly notes how such records promoted economic growth by expanding exchange beyond family, neighbours and friends. F. thereby undermines the primitivist views about loans advocated by P. Millett, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens* (1991), p. 364.

In Part 2 B. reveals the continuities and changes in the use of archives during the Hellenistic period. The *poleis* continued to store laws, decrees and financial records, but now kept letters, *prostagmata* and *diatagmata* of kings. Financial records now include payments to royal treasuries (pp. 396–402) and royal privileges such as *ateleia*. Relations with Rome also produced new types of documents (pp. 425–98). As before, the *poleis* kept decrees (pp. 409–554) and laws (pp. 555–92) in their archives. There was now a growing number of honorary decrees recording various privileges, proxeny decrees and grants of citizenship (pp. 526–30). It appears that decrees were organised chronologically and thematically (p. 524). If a copy was sent to another community, it might be stamped with the civic seal (pp. 530–1). In the case of the *koina*, member states also kept copies of federal regulations (pp. 580–3). B. gives a good discussion of the special category of sacred laws (pp. 569–74) and of the fate of laws superseded by new legislation (pp. 584–7). For the conduct of foreign relations, it was necessary to maintain records of treaties and other agreements with other communities (pp. 593–634). The institution of interstate arbitration, which grew considerably during the Hellenistic period, also generated important documents stored in the archives (pp. 635–94). These decisions included the preliminary agreement (pp. 656–65), the claims of the parties and the evidence to support them (pp. 674–6), the names of arbitrators (pp. 670–1), the oaths sworn (p. 673), the votes and the description of borders (pp. 665–70). If the decision was later challenged, the decision of the arbitrators would again be put on display (pp. 642–3). Arbitrators might also consult documents in various archives (pp. 685–90). No practice could better illustrate the documentary habits of the Greek *polis*.

As in the classical period, *poleis* kept lists of citizens and recorded the names of new citizens (pp. 693–702). In *sympoliteia* agreements new lists had to be created (pp. 703–6). Citizens were listed by tribe often assigned by lot (pp. 707–15). In some cases women (pp. 716–21), resident foreigners (pp. 730–4) and enslaved persons who were manumitted (pp. 735–8) were also registered.

The book concludes with a useful list of technical terms, an extensive bibliography, an *index locorum* and an index of names, places and notable topics.

In the *Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (edd. W. Scheidel, I. Morris and R. Saller [2007]) B. Frier and D. Kehoe (p. 135) claim that ‘ancient states were incapable of maintaining extensive records: the Greeks and Roman generally lacked the systematic public registries that are necessary for the conclusive resolution of disputes over ownership, boundaries, land use, servitudes, liens; adequate resources and bureaucracies were simply unavailable’. As B. and F. conclusively show, for the Greek world nothing could be further from the truth. It would be good to have an abridged version of this book in English without the inconclusive discussions of fragmentary inscriptions and without the lengthier footnotes. All in all, this is a very impressive work with major implications.

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