This collection of essays originated in a seminar held in Cambridge in 1993 and dedicated to that great scholar of the Hellenistic world, Frank Walbank, whose complete bibliography up to 1996 (spanning sixty-three years!) is included at the back of the volume. Twelve contributions are included covering a wide range of topics, and they are preceded by a useful introduction by Cartledge discussing trends in scholarship on the period. It is a pity that only two of the essays (those of Alcock and Green) go beyond the exclusive use of textual evidence. An important dimension of the study of the Hellenistic world is thereby missing, and it is worth noting that two other recent collections of essays on the period, *Images and Ideologies* (eds. A.W. Bulloch and others, 1993) and *Hellenistic History and Culture* (ed. P. Green, 1993), both include contributions focused on visual and material evidence. On the other hand, it is pleasing to see that non-Greek evidence is used extensively in three of the essays (those of Gruen, Millar and Thompson).

The volume begins with a clear, well-focused and penetrating paper by Alcock exploring ‘the power of the heroic past in a Hellenistic present’. She identifies a resurgence of interest in the cults of heroes in the Hellenistic age at a range of sites across mainland Greece and the Aegean, and links this to the evidence for post-classical cult at Bronze age *tholos* tombs which she has discussed in an earlier article. Several factors are then proposed to explain these phenomena: the need for elite legitimation, a desire for civic prestige, the ability of a claim to heroic associations to provide a competitive advantage in the dealings of individual *poleis* with the powerful states of the Hellenistic world, and the ability of heroes to offer *poleis* a sense of communal identity. The result is a dynamic picture of Hellenistic hero cults which is related to broader political, social and cultural developments.

Green’s general concern is with how myths were maintained and adapted in a changing world; how, for example, were heroic myths which had arisen in Mycenaean Greece treated by those Hellenistic Greeks living in distant
lands such as Egypt? His paper focuses on the Argonaut myth, whose treatment in literature and iconography since the time of Homer he discusses at length before examining its two extant representations from the Hellenistic period: Apollonios Rhodios' *Argonautika* and the *Argonautai* of Dionysios Skytobrachion, summarised at length by Diodoros. His main conclusion is that, whereas Skytobrachion follows many of the intellectual trends of his age, particularly in his rationalistic treatment of the myth, Apollonios displays an astonishing degree of independence. Although elements of his version reflect the world in which he lived, in general it is highly traditional, exemplified by its emphasis on τὸ θεῖον and its refusal to rationalise θαύματα. This conclusion seems to me to make exaggerated claims for our knowledge of what was intellectually fashionable in the mid-third century BC and I would dispute the suggestion that Apollonios' treatment of myth was so unusual for his time. Nevertheless, this paper is rich in detail and ideas, even if rather diffuse at times.

The following two papers both deal in an interesting and original way with relations between the Jews and the Hellenistic world. That by Gruen seeks to lay aside the traditional picture of a clash between Hellenism and Judaism, where every advance of the former among the Jews was made at the expense of their native traditions. Rather he demonstrates how certain Jews used their familiarity with Greek culture to affirm their own cultural identity and even superiority. They did this through creating stories about kinship connections between the Jews and individual Greek states, incidents of homage being paid by Hellenic rulers to Jewish values and the supposed Jewish roots of Greek culture. Millar's paper concentrates on the Old Testament *Book of Daniel*, a work probably composed in the 160s BC at the time of the Maccabean crisis. He shows that the different sections of the work are in fact structurally integrated to represent a succession of Near Eastern empires from the Neo-Babylonian Empire down to the Seleucids and Ptolemies. This view of history as a succession of world empires can be found both in other Jewish sources and in Greek writers such as Polybios. Moreover, he suggests that the concerns expressed in *Daniel* over the personal observance of Judaism reflect the work's time of composition, when from 167 BC onwards Judaism was being persecuted by Antiochus V Epiphanes.

Ferrary's paper takes as its subject Roman political patronage in the Hellenistic world. He argues convincingly that patronage was not imposed...
upon a reluctant Hellenistic world by the Senate, as proposed by Touloumakos, but was eagerly accepted or sought by cities desirous of having their interests championed by prominent Romans. It represented a real commitment on the part of the Romans concerned, unlike proxeny, which cities conferred on individuals in recognition of past favours and in the hope of continued services. However, it is not clear to me why the terms *patron* and *patroneia* do not occur in inscriptions before the last third of the second century BC if, in fact, cities had Roman patrons as early as the beginning of that century, nor whether the continued conferment of proxeny on Roman magistrates and senators throughout the second and first centuries BC by Athens and Rhodes, almost alone of Greek states (at least according to the epigraphic record), should be explained simply as the result of an archaising tendency. Ferrary concludes his paper by emphasising the similarity of Greek and Roman habits of mind in the philosophy of human relationships, particularly in relation to the concepts of *beneficium* and *officium* (corresponding to the Greek *euergetia* and *eucharistia*), and by suggesting the possible importance of personal patron/client relationships between Roman and Greek politicians in the internal and external politics of the Greek cities, as, for example, in the episode of the embassy of the Achaian Kallikrates in 180 BC.

This is followed by a thorough and useful contribution from Mattingly charting relations between Athens and the great powers of the Hellenistic world, including Rome, mainly using honorific decrees from the second century BC. The evidence shows that, with the exception of Macedonia, Athens generally maintained friendly relations with these powers throughout the whole of this period. Awkward situations did arise occasionally when Athens had to choose between supporting Rome or a power, such as the Seleucid kingdom, which was currently at war or at least out of favour with that city. Although Athens’ tendency was to support Roman policy, she nevertheless managed to maintain a degree of independence of action. Viewed in this light, Athens’ disastrous alliance with Mithridates VI against Rome in 88-86 BC can be seen as an aberration.

Poseidonios forms the main focus of the next two papers. In the first Bringmann argues that his account of the Athenian tyrant of 88 BC, Athenion, contains elements drawn from the story of his successor, Aristion, who is known from other sources to have conducted a reign of terror in the city. Poseidonios, however, did not mention Aristion because
he in fact ended his work with the events of 88 BC. His purpose in depicting Athenion in this way was that he wished to use him as a general moral example by portraying him as the prototypical political seducer whose demagoguery led to an Athenian alliance with Mithridates VI against Rome and to his surrender to violence and a lust for power; this moral and philosophical imperative was the historian’s greatest concern, not a desire to present a clear picture of the actual causes of events. Garnsey is concerned with trying to discern the attitude to slavery of Poseidonios as a prominent representative of the Middle Stoics. Through an analysis of a number of passages attributed to the philosopher, especially that quoted by Athenaios about the unfree Mariandynoi of Greek Herakleia, he reaches the important negative conclusion that there is no evidence for his following the Aristotelian doctrine of natural slavery or even of taking any great interest in the issue of legal slavery.

Eckstein has produced a very stimulating paper which convincingly shows that Polybios believes that Roman military success was due not to their being innately more ferocious and violent than other advanced peoples in the Mediterranean but rather to their development of superior systems of punishment, rewards and aristocratic upbringing. However, he highlights and criticises what he perceives as a growing moral decline among the Roman aristocracy during the period covered by his work. Interestingly, though somewhat speculatively, Eckstein argues that Polybios’ moral view of the Romans was heavily influenced by Cato the Elder, with whom he is likely to have had significant contact, especially via their mutual personal connections with the family of L. Aemilius Paullus.

Herman argues that the court was the central institution in the government of the Hellenistic kingdoms, forming both the king’s primary zone of influence and the intermediary through which he controlled his subjects. Taking as his starting point the theory of the court society developed by historians of early modern Europe, most notably Norbert Elias in his 1976 book on the court of Louis XIV of France, The Court Society, he analyses the workings of the Hellenistic courts using the evidence provided by Polybios. Although many of the features of later courts can be paralleled in the Hellenistic context, Herman identifies four striking differences: the intensive cooperation between courtiers and eminent people with independent power bases across the Greek world; the absence of institutions such as popular assemblies and councils of elders which could
be used for or against the king; the failure (at least according to Polybios' account) of local, indigenous noblemen to take part in court politics outside Macedonia; finally, the freedom of the Hellenistic courts from excesses of traditional ceremony and protocol, at least in the third and second centuries BC. The essay offers an important and fruitful path of investigation which should now be pursued beyond the bounds of the evidence provided by Polybios' work.

The last two papers deal with Ptolemaic Egypt but each in a very different way from the other. Thompson's deals with the operation of the fiscal system in the third and second centuries BC and is based in particular on a minute analysis of the new tax documents which she is preparing for publication with Willy Clarysse. Two particularly striking features which she identifies are the progressive lowering of the rate of the salt-tax during the second half of the third century BC and the tax exemption granted to privileged groups, notably the Hellenes and Persians (neither of which represented a strict ethnic designation). However, she also demonstrates well the complexity of the record-keeping involved, while at the same time making clear the difficulty in using and checking some of the documents and the potential for abuse of the system. Bagnall's paper, on the other hand, makes little reference to papyri but instead convincingly questions the value of the colonial anthropological model drawn from studies of modem European imperialism and advanced by Will and others as a way of understanding the country. Instead he advocates the use of comparative material drawn both from colonised societies and from societies displaying hierarchical and unequal power relationships to inform the imagination and suggest questions and possible scenarios which can then be tested against the ancient evidence. He includes imaginative literature among this material and gives an example relevant to Ptolemaic Egypt drawn from a quartet of novels set in Java during the period of Dutch rule.

Overall, this is a very interesting collection of essays whose quality is generally extremely high. If there is a tendency for many of the papers to discuss individual texts or passages at length, there is never a sense that they are only concerned with minuitieae rather than with the bigger picture. Although there are some significant gaps in the volume's coverage of the Hellenistic world, it does display something of the rich diversity of possible approaches to that fascinating subject, ranging from traditional philology to the construction of models and from the use of comparative material to the
investigation of the abundant evidence from those non-Greek cultures which came within Hellenism’s sphere of influence.

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