

CHANKOWSKI (A.S.), **L'éphébie hellénistique. Étude d'une institution civique dans les cités grecques des îles de la Mer Égée et de l'Asie Mineure**, Paris, de Boccard, 2010 [2011] (Culture et cité, 4). Pp. 621. €85.00. 2-7018-0305-0.

This is an excellent study of an institution that was central to many Greek cities of the Hellenistic period. The book, whose real date of publication is December 2011, is the reworked version of a doctoral thesis defended in Warsaw in 1996. The well-worn term 'long-awaited' is for once truly appropriate, for in the intervening years, the book's imminent publication was repeatedly and tantalizingly referred to in a series of preparatory articles. Almost inevitably, some of its main themes have been explored by others during that time (e.g. in D. Kah and P. Scholz's *Das hellenistische Gymnasium* (2004); A. Chaniotis' *War in the Hellenistic World* (2005); E. Perrin-Saminadayar's *Éducation, culture et société à Athènes* (2007), and C. Brelaz's *La sécurité publique en Asie Mineure sous le Principat* (2005). Only the first of these titles has made it into C.'s bibliography.

Simply to call this a reworking does not do justice to Chankowski's achievement. Although his main arguments have not, one suspects, fundamentally changed since 1996, the breadth and depth of the author's scholarship, the thoughtfulness and intellectual rigour with which he makes his case (and holds it up for questioning), can only be the result of many years of reflection. The book covers a lot more ground than its title indicates: thematically, geographically and chronologically, and far more than a short review can do justice to. It is based on a close study of a large body of – mainly epigraphic – evidence, all of which is presented for easy consultation in the 100-page long Catalogue at the end, whose 444 entries, geographically organized, contain brief but important and often searching discussions (relevant sections of text are cited). This appendix forms an essential complement to the discussion in the main text.

Chankowski's central thesis has two elements: first, that the institution of the *ephebeia*, which became one of the main markers of Hellenistic *polis*-identity, spread widely in the wake of Alexander's conquests and was adopted from, and modelled on, the late fourth-century (335 BC) Athenian prototype of the so-called 'Lycurgan' *ephebeia*, itself probably a reformed version of an earlier 4th-century institution; secondly, that it was the Athenians themselves who adapted, in the course of the fourth century BC, a vocabulary centred on ἄβη: 'manhood', 'prime', and its derivatives (ἐφηβᾶν: 'to be on the threshold of manhood'), for technical, institutional, purposes. The newly coined noun *ephebos* thus came to be used for members of the annual cohorts of young citizen-males who, from the age of eighteen, collectively underwent an intensive two-year military (and ideological) training.

The emphasis on the technical character of the word *ephebos* is important for C. The modern use of the word 'ephebe', broadly referring to an age category (late adolescence) and a physical 'type', is inspired by art-historical terminology, which itself derives from late-antique usage. This, the 'non-technical' sense of *ephebos*, was never used in the Classical and early Hellenistic period. But its use has led to slippage in many a modern study of 'coming of age'; a conflating of *ephebeia* with 'initiation', and, in the case of Athens, a misunderstanding of the age at which Athenian males reached legal majority. All this, and much more, is discussed with eminent clarity in C's first chapter.

In the second chapter C. discusses the earliest attestations of *ephebeia* outside Athens, and it is on the basis of these that he is able to make his main point about the primacy of the Athenian institution, for all postdate the Athenian reform. The earliest known cases are Eretria (315–305 BC), Alexandria (here C. makes a case for the *ephebeia* being part and parcel of Alexander's constitution for the city at its foundation; it is perhaps stretching belief a little that, only three years after the Athenians introduced their new regime, Alexander had already adopted this particular model for his new Egyptian city; the evidence is, moreover, late, and problematic), the Boiotian cities and Troizen (both early 3rd century). Parallel institutions (the Kyrenian *Triakatai*, the Spartan age-class system; the Syracusan *epikrateia* under Hiero II) are compared, but found wanting as models for the Hellenistic *ephebeia*. Significant absences in a number of prominent cities (neither Thasos nor Rhodes had an *ephebeia*) are also discussed at some length.

In Asia minor and on the islands, early evidence is fragmentary and scarce. Only Miletos (262/260), Samos (240s), and Thera (240 or after) offer unambiguous attestations. Since C's main thesis would lose significantly in persuasiveness with evidence so meagre, an argument about the meaning of the term *neoi* in a number of crucial, early third-century documents, has to come to his aid. An institution closely associated with the *ephebeia*, that of the *neoi* (young citizens between the ages of 20 and 30, fellow-users of the gymnasium) developed especially in the cities of Asia Minor in the early 3rd century (precisely how, and why, and why here, is a question that goes beyond the remit of this review but is not unimportant for C.'s thesis). C. argues that, in a gymnasial context, the term *neoi* had the more general meaning of 'jeunesse du gymnase (and thus included both ephebes and – 'real' – *neoi*). When we find for instance a 'gymnasiarch of the *neoi*', the title should be taken to mean 'chef du gymnase' more generally, i.e. in charge of all three categories of users: *neoi*, ephebes and *paides*.

If correct, this would allow us to postulate, in a much larger number of cases, the early presence of a body of ephebes despite there being no direct attestation until much later. I am sceptical about this double interpretation of the term *neoi* (unlike some other reviewers) and therefore, to my mind, the monocausal explanation of the *ephebeia*'s adoption in the Hellenistic cities loses in force. This criticism should not, however, detract from the immense value of this study, whose rich discussions of many aspects of the Hellenistic *ephebeia* merit close and repeated reading. Monocausal explanations are always to be distrusted, as the author himself would be the first to admit.