

In Chapter 11, ‘Marathon under Rome’, Plutarch is the exception. The section devoted to the many mentions this versatile author makes of Marathon in a number of works is detailed, rich and rewarding (pp. 159–65). The section on Herodes Atticus (pp. 167–71) spends far more time on a range of orators and authors loosely connected to Herodes, such as Aelius Aristides, Lucian, Aelian and others from the later Roman empire, such as Libanius. With respect to Herodes, N. primarily focuses on the family’s promotion of an ancestor, Eucles, as the runner who brought news of victory to Athens. An opportunity is missed here to explore the intricacies of Herodes’ relationship with Marathon, which was complex and pervasive, in a similar depth to Plutarch’s literary engagement. Alongside an epigraphic casting as a new ‘hero of Marathon’ (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 6791), for example, the Athenian magnate also represented the landscape of the deme as empty and barren prior to his family’s cultivation of it (*SEG* 53.220). The many monuments he raised on his estate there, moreover, engage with the Marathon legend in a number of ways to ascribe personal meaning to the plain and write memory anew. Herodes thus cashes in on the power of the idea of Marathon at the same time as promoting his self-image above it.

The final chapter, ‘Marathon after Antiquity’, is a series of snapshots across 1,000 years and suffers from a similar lack of depth to the previous chapter. It briefly treats an eleventh-century Persian romantic epic and the Iranian Shah’s ill-advised revival of Achaemenid history at Persepolis in 1971, the experiences of early western European travellers to the plain, Byron’s association of Marathon with Greek freedom (both ancient and modern) in *Childe Harold* (1812) and *Don Juan* (1821), the Greek Colonels’ use of Marathon to legitimise their military junta beginning in 1967, Marathon-themed juvenilia of Elizabeth Barrett (later Barrett-Browning) and the Brontës, Robert Browning’s influential refocusing of cultural attention on the run and the idea of endurance in his *Pheidippides* (1879) poem, how this was picked up in a number of modern children’s and young adult books, and finally Marathon in the popular culture of recent graphic novels and films. This whirlwind tour effectively highlights the ubiquity of the Marathon legend in later culture and the themes (such as endurance) that become most relevant, but this reviewer would have liked clearer justification for the choices of focus and a fuller explanation of their significance. As N. rightly notes, this would require another book, and her thought-provoking examples offer a number of threads waiting to be pulled by future scholars.

This is a very good, stimulating book, whose attention to the cultural history of Marathon’s commemoration is a welcome addition to scholarship on the battle and its reception.

University of Queensland

ESTELLE STRAZDINS  
[e.strazdins@uq.edu.au](mailto:e.strazdins@uq.edu.au)

## REMEMBERING THE PERSIAN WARS

PROIETTI (G.) *Prima di Erodoto. Aspetti della memoria delle Guerre persiane.* (*Hermes Einzelschriften* 120.) Pp. xviii + 546, ills. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2021. Cased, €96. ISBN: 978-3-515-12887-2.  
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This volume is a dense, well-informed and thoroughly researched contribution to the field of memory studies applied to the ancient world and, particularly, to the topic of the Persian

Wars. 'Comprehensiveness', emphasised by N. Luraghi in the prologue (p. xi), is the main asset of the book: building upon a decade of research on Herodotus and the memory of the Persian Wars in Athens, P. gathers all possible kinds of evidence to reconstruct the early stages of that process, previous to the monumental work of Herodotus, producing a compelling picture of this complex phenomenon. The book arises from awareness that the memory of the wars could have reached Herodotus neither 'immutato, nella stessa forma acquisita nell'immediato dopoguerra' (p. 1) nor monolithic and panhellenic, a single discourse for all different *poleis* involved. At the same time P. insists that the identification of Herodotus with 'the' narrative of the Persian Wars is that of modern readers, while the wars were extensively commemorated by the Greeks through other means 'outside' Herodotus.

The approach, then, is far from conventional. First, Herodotus is only a secondary objective of the book. Of course, the exploration of the multilayered 'stratigraphy' of memory in the first decades of the Pentekontaetia results in further light on the foundations and patterns of Herodotus' *Histories*, but the real focus is on the various memory 'media' across the first decades of the period. Second, the study rests on a truly interdisciplinary reflection on memory from a historical perspective, and P. draws from the massive pool of recent research on memory studies to set the theoretical framework for her inquiry. She presents history as 'l'esito di dinamiche memoriali complesse' (p. 2) and the book as 'una prima tappa di un ambizioso progetto mnemostorico' (p. 6); so the entire work stands as a thorough and multifaceted reflection on memory as a dynamic process. And third, the responsibility for the construction of memory is not attributed to a group in power or to 'power' in general ('il ricordo del passato recente non è prodotto e divulgato dall'alto', p. 3), but to a collective, civic effort of communication involving the entire *polis*, through a wide range of interconnected 'media' ('iscrizioni, pitture murali, templi, statue, paesaggi e porzioni di spazio urbano e spazio sacro, elegie, odi, ditirambi, epigrammi, tragedie, riti, culti e festival', p. 438).

The structure of the book and the distribution of contents show P.'s effort to make the ideas easily accessible and understandable: after a prologue by Luraghi, P. presents the premise of the book ('Premessa') in a short, introductory section, spelling out the underlying ideas and concepts that sustain her research and containing a detailed description of the different chapters and sections; then, the final conclusions ('Conclusionone') put together the main implications drawn from the preceding research, emphasising how memory is 'weaved' from different 'threads' of memory 'media', how memory is not built as a monument but multilayered as a stratigraphy, and how this is a communal process involving the entire *polis*; third, a brief but comprehensive 'Summary of the book' is offered in English, providing an additional way to facilitate its dissemination; finally, every chapter ends with a section that summarises the central ideas, linking the different chapters and building a continuous line of argument. In a long and dense project such as this, this effort is welcome.

The core of the book consists of an introduction and five long chapters. The introduction, 'Introduzione. Memoria e storia', attempts 'una panoramica di prospettive teoriche e metodologiche' on recent memory studies and not 'l'ennesima asettica rassegna degli studi sinora condotti sul tema' (p. 12). The section brings together the different approaches to (and lines of research on) memory from an interdisciplinary perspective, from M. Halbwachs to the 'cultural memory' of J. Assmann and A. Assmann in the 1990s. It is a comprehensive and detailed summary of the state of the discipline, perhaps too advanced for newcomers, but helpful for students and scholars trying to get a grip on recent developments. The chapter contains specific sections on memory and war (with particular attention to 'trauma' as part of the process of

remembrance of conflict) and the memory of the Persian Wars, which has received considerable attention recently, particularly since the seminal studies by J. Hall and E. Hall.

The five following chapters are arranged in chronological order, following a sort of 'stratigrafia della memoria' (a very fitting archaeological metaphor), of which P. differentiates three: a post-Marathon layer (corresponding to the 480s BCE), a post-second Persian War layer (corresponding to the 470s and 460s), and a First Peloponnesian War layer (corresponding to the 450s). The most complex stage is the second, which takes three chapters (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) to develop, while the other two take just one each (Chapter 1 for stage 1, Chapter 5 for stage 3). In each of them P. tries to present the main topics, concepts and problems, but she accepts that sharp boundaries cannot be established between them, not only because of the dynamics of memory-building, but also because of the tendency of Athenian oral tradition towards archaisation. In this process the focus is not exclusively Athenian, but engages in the analysis of the abundant non-Athenian evidence to provide the most comprehensive picture possible.

The first chapter, 'Atene dopo il 490: Maratona come vittoria dell'esercito cittadino', deals with Marathon and its overwhelming impact on Athenian self-consciousness and self-image. This first layer of memory is composed around the notion of communal participation, a victory of the whole *polis*, and it is exclusively Athenian since no other *polis* makes a consistent claim to have participated in any way (which could have been Eretria's stance in this stage, we can only guess). The second chapter, 'Dopo la Guerra contro Serse: una prospettiva "poli-ellenica"', analyses the first Greek reactions to the invasion of Xerxes in the immediate war and post-war years and incorporates other centres of memory, such as Sparta, Corinth and Thebes; it also introduces the Panhellenic approach, since Plataea and the defeat of the Persians were collective enterprises. The intervention of Delphi is another significant Panhellenic factor. In the third chapter, 'Il lungo dopoguerra: fare i conti con il trauma', the focus is on how the Athenians came to terms with the effects of the war in the long run, particularly with the occupation and destruction of the city by the Persians, a wound that remained open and visible in their urban landscape for almost 40 years, showing the 'other side' of memory (mourning instead of celebrating). The fourth chapter, 'La memoria di Maratona e l'egemonia ateniese', explores the evolution and transformation of the memory of Marathon in the context of the Athenian hegemony in the Aegean, manufacturing a 'local episode' into a 'Panhellenic myth' in order to legitimize Athenian continued leadership over her allies and her project of continued resistance against the Persians. Finally, the fifth chapter, 'La "prima Guerra del Peloponneso": il fronte ateniese e l'inizio della riconfigurazione anti-espertana delle Guerre persiane', deals with the new reorientation of the Athenian memory of the wars to fit the new geo-strategic situation of bipolar confrontation between the 'Spartan' and the 'Athenian' blocks from the 460s onwards, in a context in which the old alliances are shattered and conflict between great powers (Argos, Corinth, Thebes) escalates. This stage provides the fuel that ignites Herodotus' narrative.

The book accomplishes its aims in a remarkable way: the topics are carefully addressed and interconnected, the process of memory-building is clearly and persuasively argued, pieces of all kinds of evidence are analysed and integrated, and the theoretical framework provides a firm background for reflection. The narrative is dense and rich, full of detail and information, but the supporting evidence, both primary and secondary, is equally massive and comprehensive. In sum, *Prima di Erodoto* emerges as an extremely valuable contribution to the field and a most interesting and entertaining read.

Complutense University

FERNANDO ECHEVERRÍA  
fcheverria@ucm.es