



Porter, A.E. (2020): 'Editorial'

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<http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/issue25/Editorial.pdf>

Editorial

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to Issue 25 of the Rosetta Journal. This is a momentous occasion for our journal and as such, to celebrate the successful launches of 25 issues, and additional supplementary issues, since Autumn 2006, this is our commemorative special edition, called 'Milestones'. 'Milestones' encapsulates figurative, physical and research milestones which all researchers tackle with in a broad sense. In the last fourteen years we have showcased the interdisciplinary nature of not just postgraduates in the CAHA department, previously the IAA, here at the University of Birmingham but our scope has been far-reaching, engaging with the postgraduate community across the world.

This issue has been troubled by its own milestone event, COVID-19, which truly has been, and continues to be, a devastating pandemic which has impacted the lives of everyone around the world. It is due to the impact of COVID-19 that this issue is almost three months later than planned. I can only apologise, but I hope that you understand that we, as a committee, have had to navigate our own lives as we have adjusted to the new 'normal'.

I would like to start by thanking the almost completely new committee that was established after the Rosetta Journal underwent a brief hiatus from Summer to Autumn 2020. As such I would like to introduce you to the hard-working and devoted team, we have worked together and been abstract with each other from the beginning. Firstly, I would like to thank Rhys James Jenkins, our new articles editor, who has been thorough in his examination and selection of our articles who has maintained good relationships with our extensive team of specialist editors. Next, I would like to thank Lluís Jerez Bertolín, our new Book Reviews Editor, whose detailed critique and meticulous communication with our Book Reviewers and other authors has been exemplary. I would like to thank Antonios Savva for continuing with his role as Short Pieces Editor, especially as he was completing his own PhD thesis which has now been accepted with minor corrections. His continued commitment to the Rosetta Journal and his fantastic reviewing skills have remained steadfast during this time. After the trouble that we had last year in finding a Treasurer, Laura Clark has been a wonderful addition to the team, she has endeavoured to continue our

funding from the CAL Graduate School, especially in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on our funding status. I would like to thank King Tin Raphael Lam for returning to the committee as IT Officer, I have worked with you on this committee since 2018 and your willingness to return to the Journal, as well as your prompt delivery of updates to our website has been exemplary, especially in light of your residence in Hong Kong for the earlier part of 2020. Finally, I would like to thank Hebe Barlow, our new Marketing Officer, your enthusiasm within this role has been astounding, especially with spreading the sphere of the journal on social media through Instagram and for networking with perspective contributors, highlighting our need for Short Pieces to be submitted. Special thanks go to Laura and Hebe for organising the virtual launch party on Zoom, without which we would be unable to celebrate our success. I would also like to thank all of the Copy Editors for their swift and diligent work with getting the papers ready for publication: Rachael Helen Banes, Mike Burling, Ben Dewar, Teifion Gambold, Penny Mantouvalou, Agni Agathi Papamichael and Jen Turner. Further thanks goes to all our specialist editors, we could not have created this issue without your knowledge and expertise.

Now, to move onto the focal point, the contributions for this special issue which I have thoroughly enjoyed reading and, I hope, that you will find them just as engaging. We have papers from a wide spectrum of disciplines from the Byzantine world to an exhibition review, the time range extends across from the prehistoric period through to the 12th Century AD.

We start with an article by Foivi-Eirini Georgiadi, a current Master's student at University of Birmingham, who presents an impressive and in-depth analysis into a piece of Byzantine literature, a figurative milestone in its writing. She explores Constantine Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike*, written in the 12th Century AD, by examining his creative and stylistic choices for writing the chronicle. Georgiadi focuses on the originality of the *Synopsis Chronike*, especially in its resemblance to Byzantine novels and Manasses' desire to please his patroness, *sebastokratorissa* Irene, in choosing elements usually seen in novels in his writing. Georgiadi argues that Manasses' ultimate aim was to carefully select episodes from history that would

entertain his readers which resonated throughout the medieval period, there were numerous future manuscripts of this chronicle showing the extent of its impact.

Next, we have three book reviews that have their own representations of milestones. First, is a contribution from Connor Beattie, currently at Magdalen College, University of Oxford, who reviews Sarah Davies recent 2019 book, *'Rome, Global Dreams, and the International Origins of an Empire'*. This review is generally positive, especially as it is a milestone in research that Davies' takes by using an ideological approach over the warfare approach that other scholars have utilised previously. Ultimately, although Beattie is generally positive on the position of interconnectivity, and its future impact on Middle Republican imperialism studies, he is not convinced that Rome's aim was to become the *kosmopolis*, an overarching polis which was never achieved in previous empires, unifying all people and living as one unit. He goes as far to challenge Davies' interpretation of the ancient sources and her view on the *kosmopolis*, which is very convincingly conveyed.

The next review is by Thomas Clements, currently at University of Manchester. He reviews David M. Lewis' 2018 book, *'Greek Slave Systems in their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c. 800-146 BC'*, naming it as a "significant contribution" (23) to ancient slavery studies, it certainly is a milestone in scholarship, moving past its previously "underlying assumptions" (23). Clements credits the book as "a good, critical introduction" to ancient slavery studies, as there was definite regionality evident in the case areas chosen: Greece and Persia though he challenges Lewis' use of an "impressionist approach" (25), especially in terms of the use of 8th Century BC literature and localised realities that are not always included.

The final instalment is by myself, I am a current PhD student at University of Birmingham, where I review Graham Shipley's 2018 book, *'The Early Hellenistic Peloponnese: Politics, Economies, and Networks 338-197 BC'*. As this is only the second book to be written on the Hellenistic Peloponnese, it is a real milestone in research, as Shipley uses a wide range of source material including literary, archaeological and numismatic material. I argue that the scope of this book and the historical narrative provided by Shipley, though sometimes either too extensive or lacking, means it is "thought-provoking" (31) and "highly accessible" (32) to a wide

range of readers. However, I note that “there is too much material covered” (33) with three diverse topics approached: politics, economies and networks; and that use of archaeological excavations, inclusion of photographs and a more in-depth view on local issues would have developed Shipley’s argument further.

Finally, we have a short piece contributed by Chrysanthi Chrysanthou, currently at Newcastle University. She provides an intriguing and evocative insight into the ‘Troy: Myth and Reality’ exhibition that took place recently at the British Museum. This was a milestone exhibition showcasing the Trojan War myth and reality but also its later reception. Chrysanthou argues that the exhibition could have benefitted from highlighting “the wider literary context” (35) to the general public, so that they could appreciate the multiple layers to the Trojan myth. Chrysanthou provides a well-rounded review on this exhibition, claiming that it “presented a fair sample of the richness of the myth, its messages, ideals and its influences on our culture” (38). Although, Chrysanthou emphasises that there was some overcrowding, lack of information for an academic audience. She also notes that the final artistic choice was not bold enough and there was no attempt to answer the big questions, like “Was there a Trojan War” (39) at all?

Welcome to our special Issue 25, Milestones, I hope that you enjoy reading this issue that we have all worked so hard on, it has been a joy to read and collaborate with all of the editorial team. Thank you all.

Amy Porter

General Editor