The editor then goes on to state the aims and purposes of this volume: it concentrates on medical doxography, a subject that has been neglected since the beginning of the twentieth century until a recent surge of interest in the reception of Hippocrates and the rôle of tradition in the development of medical theory and practice. As a result of this, editions of the most important medico-doxographical texts have either appeared (Anonymus Parisinus) or will be appearing soon (Anonymus Londiniensis, Anonymus Bruxellensis).

The focus of the present volume is on individual texts and authors, treated in roughly chronological order. Following D. T. Runia's chapter, these are: Aristotle (J. Althoff), the Anonymus Londiniensis (D. Manetti), Hellenistic texts (H. van Staden), Aetius (D. T. Runia), Celsus (H. van Staden), the Anonymus Parisinus (P. J. van der Eijk), Galen (M. Vegetti twice and A. Roselli), Soranus and Caelius Aurelianus (P. J. van der Eijk), the Anonymus Bruxellensis (A. Debru), and Oribasius (R. de Lucia).

The editor's self-depreciating statements to the effect that this volume intends merely to encourage further research should not make one fail to recognize the import ance of this achievement, which constitutes the resurrection of medico-doxographical studies on a larger scale (and the creation of a new type of such studies) and the first book on the subject—at least in English—in decades. It will be of equal interest to classicists and medical historians, as well as to those studying the doxography of other subjects.

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THE *LONGUE DURÉE* OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

P. Horden, N. Purcell: *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History*. Pp. xiii + 761, 34 maps. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. Paper, £24.99 (Cased, £70). ISBN: 0631-21890-4 (0631-13666-5 hbk).

The *Corrupting Sea* is a book that all classicists should read. It takes as its point of departure Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London, 1972–3) to look back to the earlier periods of the Medieval and Ancient Mediterranean. In so doing, the book presents us with a refined Braudelian perspective that places a special emphasis on the ecology and inter-connectivity between the micro-regions of the Mediterranean. A real strength of the book for the historian of antiquity is the breaking of the academic division of antiquity from the medieval period. Horden and Purcell stress the similarities between micro-regions across space and time, yet manage to emphasize the differences between a micro-region and its neighbours. This seemingly paradoxical position is in fact an analytical strength, since by placing the emphasis in this way (rather than in terms of larger regional units or a continuity from past to present favoured by many anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians) H. & P. have managed to create a dynamic viewpoint of the Mediterranean past that encapsulates the whole whilst defining the rôle of the micro-region.

The authors challenge many of the major assumptions common in the scholarship and teaching of ancient history. The idea that the Mediterranean of modern geography or that patterns of human exploitation have remained static is a frequent object of attack. This viewpoint, found most strongly in Northern Europe from the time of the Grand Tour, has caused us today to assume too readily that there is some form of imagined continuity between the past of antiquity and, for example, the shepherd grazing his goats in modern Greece. The difficulty, as H. & P. point out, is to identify how the plethora of slow and seemingly minor changes of the *longue durée* can be sifted to locate those that are of the greatest significance. This outlook is made rightly more complicated by an emphasis on the lack of fixity of geographical entities. This is demonstrated most eloquently in their discussion of towns. These seemingly solid architectural entities that were the location of government are found in the turmoil of the *longue durée* to become loose and lose their significance as fixed places within history. For H. & P., a town is affected by the fluidity of movement and the interconnectivity between towns. This reduces the Braudelian view that 'a town is a town wherever it is' to a town as 'an address, an arena, an architectonic agglomeration' (p. 90). Topics of debate over recent years related to urban history in antiquity are altered or polemically rejected. The Weberian ideal types of consumer and producer city associated with the ancient and the medieval city respectively cannot stand up to the united scrutiny of an ancient historian and a medievalist (pp. 101–5). The study of the town in relationship to its countryside or the town and its rural hinterland is found wanting, because both categories are too small to illustrate their historical significance. The geographical maxims of central place theory and the rank sized rule are justifiably rejected as irrelevant for the study of the ancient Mediterranean. What is clear here is that we are now well beyond the orthodox views derived from the work of Moses Finley that have dominated the study of the city in antiquity. H. & P. have succeeded in making this break by reducing the significance of the town to a node within a fluid and changing system of connectivity.

Underpinning much of the book is H. & P.'s concept of *connectivity* defined in Chapter V. This is a reaction to the impossibility of describing a region, place, or thing without running into the danger of creating a teleological unity between two distinct times within the past or the simple impossibility of defining a region. Connectivity relates the micro-region to the larger phenomenon of the Mediterranean. To make matters more complicated, the nature of connectivity is constantly changing rather like a model of fluid dynamics, in which there is constant change at a micro-level yet there is an overall but indiscernible pattern. H. & P. point to the fact that the configuration of geography is physically static, but the configuration of transport is subject to change. They demonstrate this factor by a comparison of the Peutinger table and a nineteenth-century map of the routes in the Peloponnese (p. 128). They also show that even the most mountainous terrain can in fact promote communication via road building. In defining the interconnection of regions, H. & P. rightly place an emphasis on the rôle of sight and the visual ordering of geography. The pattern of the sight of land or of two points on the land from the sea is seen to define the nature of connection between places (Map 9). This, they argue, is the defining physical feature that creates a pattern of movement of people, goods, and ideas in Mediterranean history. That is not to say that it creates what we today refer to as shipping lanes, but instead a pattern of sea travel associated with departure from port, sheltering, detour, and accidental arrival that was the major characterization of shipping in antiquity (p. 140). The authors define trade with reference to the commonplace caboteur, rather than the exceptional large-scale example of the grain supply of Rome (pp. 144–5),

to create a constant or representative pattern of trade and exchange in the Mediterranean. Although the authors try not to underestimate the rôle of land transport, it is reduced by the overall emphasis on the sea. Roads are seen to have created connections between harbours, rather than as acting as a complementary system of transportation (pp. 126–8). This may result from a need to emphasize the place of the Mediterranean as an historical entity that is seen to be distinctive from that of, say, the whole Roman empire that would include much of Northern Europe as well. Land and river connectivity could perform the rôle of the sea within the framework of H. & P.'s thesis on the history of connectivity and the fluid joining of micro-regions (the promised Volume II may deal with this aspect). Here, the argument that the Mediterranean and its history is in some way unique is unconvincing, once history is defined via the fluidity of the connection between places. There may be a disjunction of the ideas for the project generated in its early stages and the completion of the book itself somewhat later, once the ideas of the authors had moved from the initial Braudelian focus (a change of emphasis that might be plotted in the literature on geographical space over the period of the project).

The implications of H. & P.'s thesis on the connectivity of micro-regions are discussed first with reference to food and the agricultural fauna of the Mediterranean. They reject any simple division of arable:pastoral or plain:hill, and replace these simple divisions with the interconnectivity of the different modes of environmental exploitation: woodlands are seen as key for the productivity of metals, wetlands for a variety of produce, tree crops, animal husbandry, and cereals. The neglect of the wetlands by earlier writers is highlighted and the importance of these zones is emphasized. Productivity and trade in eels demonstrates the vitality of these regions economically, so easily written off in the twentieth century as malarial marshes much in need of drainage. H. & P. cite the example of the Orontes in which catches of eels could be as large as half a million per annum. The wetlands are also the areas from which some of Italy's most famous wines have their origins (e.g. Caecuban). A good case for the importance of the wetland in Mediterranean history is demonstrated here. Many understudied items appear through the section including the emergence of the fig alongside the olive and vine as a major tree crop.

There follows discussion of the technology of agrarian change and the history of agriculture. Here, H. & P. have no time for a history of technology that places the earliest point of invention in relationship to, say, the politics of statehood or other pivotal turning points in standard political narratives (pp. 242–3, 281–91). In its place, they engagingly argue that individual changes in technology, e.g. a different type of plough or the first importation of buffalo, take time to affect the whole agricultural system. This does not mean that Greek and Roman agriculture was primitive or subsistence based—two other concepts effectively destroyed by H. & P. (pp. 271–4), along with the false notion that Rome damaged the sustainability of the environment through utter ignorance (p. 257), and that there was a simple dichotomy between élite and peasant. In place of these simplistic assumptions, they posit a model of agriculture in which there is a pattern of good and bad years of production (pp. 271–4). The good years produce glut, whereas the bad years can produce famine. The bad years would, according to them (citing three years of famine in *Lib. Pont.* 708–75), outnumber the good years. Hence, the producer aimed at overproduction to counteract this pattern, whilst the brokers exploited these patterns via storage and redistribution to their own gain and advantage. The expectation of catastrophe and its normality is a theme in the following chapter, with a view to the writing of a history that creates an intersection between the physical changes of the earth or the natural instability of the

Mediterranean environment and historical narrative. It will come as no surprise that the authors reject natural or environmental catastrophe as an explanation of historical change (pp. 299–303). As they point out, the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79 affected the micro-region associated with it, but no political, social, or economic consequence was recorded to suggest the catastrophe had an effect on other micro-regions. However, this form of argument is reminiscent of Moses Finley's that the absence of Cloth Halls in antiquity demonstrated the weakness of the economy—a form of argumentation seen as ineffective (p. 359). This absence of evidence for the effect of volcanic eruption is counteracted by H. & P.'s powerful argument that the interconnectivity of micro-regions would cause an effect elsewhere in the system. This is a matter of argumentation; what is clear though is that catastrophes do not explain economic, social, or political change. The regular events of flood, soil erosion, and alluviation were a part of the inhabitants' environmental expectations, along with seismic and volcanic activity. In *The Corrupting Sea*, we have a first step towards an understanding of the symbiosis of humanity and the environment of the Mediterranean that does not place an emphasis on catastrophe and assume man's inability to deal with it.

The theme of connectivity is pursued in a chapter on trade. The earlier debates over the high cost of transport as a major inhibitor of interregional trade are effectively removed here. Much of the argument of cost is based on the prices given in Diocletian's Price Edict. H. & P. view this as equivalent to the use of a quote from the removal company Pickfords today to represent the actual cost of the movement of all goods (p. 377). They also point out that the movement of grain and other bulk goods in terms of tribute, military requisition, rent, agricultural strategies, and food crisis speculation is not covered by the costs derived from the Price Edict. Other Finley concerns are also discussed, including the economic rôle of textiles (pp. 352–63). For the political historian concerned with the forced removal of the Roman peasantry from the land and migration to the towns due to economic adversity, H. & P. (p. 383) present a convincing argument for the voluntary migration of the peasantry to the towns as a not unusual phenomenon that need not be related to the economic situation of the countryside. The evidence from shipwrecks provides the data for the demonstration of the strength and high degree of the movement of goods and increased connectivity that is associated with the Roman empire (Table 5). The strength of an economy whose trade was based on small cargoes of mixed goods is put forward effectively (pp. 368–72).

For me, the book demonstrates how far ancient history has moved on from the Finley orthodoxy I was taught as an undergraduate, and at the same time exposes the general weakness of historical method within the study of the history of the Mediterranean. The emphasis on the fluidity of place and the connectivity across space is most welcome and opens up questions on the nature of change during antiquity in terms of mobility and the identity of places. Inevitably with an emphasis on the *longue durée* in this book, the individual and individual action disappears. The book's Braudelian position may not be to everyone's taste, but certainly it will provoke further thoughts and ideas to be pursued by the reader.

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