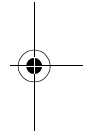
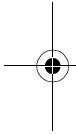


## PEER POLITY INTERACTION IN THE HELLENISTIC AGE\*

### I

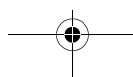
#### INTRODUCTION: NETWORKING CITY-STATES

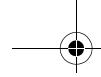
In 205 BC, the citizens of Kytention, a small city in central Greece, faced with the expensive and time-consuming task of rebuilding their walls thrown down a generation earlier by earthquake and by war, remembered that they were the original Dorians. Inhabitants of Doris, a prestigious region in Greek myth, they would exploit this identity to rebuild their ravaged community. The Kytentionians thus embarked on a staggeringly ambitious fund-raising scheme, by sending envoys (including at least one mythology specialist) to every state that was Dorian or Dorian-related. In the one surviving document of the fund-raising venture, the Kytentionian mission appears in Xanthos, in Lykia, at the other side of the Aegean: presumably only one stop on a vast, carefully compiled list of potential donors. The envoys performed their duty, demonstrating *sungeneia* (kinship), showing in great detail through a mythological lecture how the Xanthians were not only related to the Kytentionians, but in their debt, because of an act of kindness performed in very remote times by a certain hero. The Xanthians acknowledged the prestigious kinship relation, but refused any major expenditure. Approached in the realm of symbolic capital, they responded in kind, with a token, if respectable, grant,<sup>1</sup> a free meal and lots of



\*I presented some of this material to a graduate seminar in Princeton in spring 1998, gaining much in the process thanks to the comments of Al Bertrand, Peter Burk, Sean Corner, Kasia Hagemajer, Emily Mackil, Jackie Maxwell, Peter Turner and Jamie Woolard. Beate Dignas invited me to give a version of this article in Michigan in spring 2001; since then, the content benefited greatly from comments by Fergus Millar, Robin Osborne and Jas Elsner. Many and heartfelt thanks to all.

<sup>1</sup>The sum they offered was 500 *drachmai*, which is the equivalent of a year's wages — as attested for teachers in the *gymnasion* in that period: see *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, 3rd edn, ed. W. Dittenberger, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1915–24), ii, texts nos. 577–8 — but not enough to make a large dent in the massive costs of fortification building, which was counted in talents (each talent being worth 6,000 *drachmai*). See texts gathered in *Griechische Mauerbauinschriften*, ed. F. G. Maier, 2 vols. (Heidelberg, 1959–61).



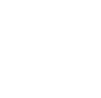
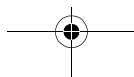
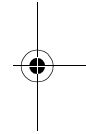
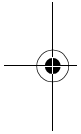


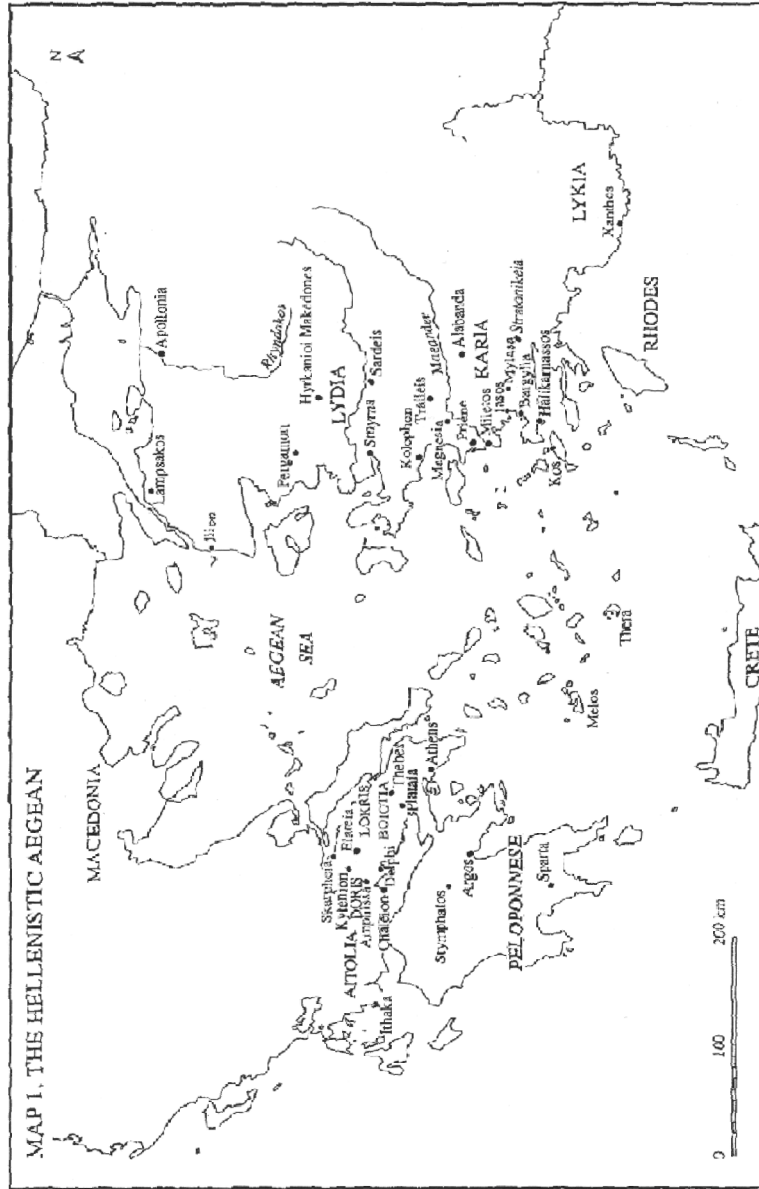
words: the very words which we can now read. In spite of its density, the text is worth quoting at length, for the way it enfoldes this drama of interaction in a single, extensive enactment. Its detailed texture is also characteristic of the public literature of civic interaction and diplomacy in this period; the arguments and the appeals made, the values of reciprocity and obligation, and the assumptions about the actors — all come across with striking vividness.<sup>2</sup>

In the 17th year of the rule of Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Berenike the *Theoi Euergetai* (the benefactor gods), and his son Ptolemy, when Ptolemaios son of Andronikos son of Perlamos was priest of the *Theoi Euergetai* and of King Ptolemy, and when Tlepolemos son of Artapates was priest before the city (*pro poleos*), an assembly having taken place on the 2nd of (the month of) Audnaios, this resolution was made by the city and the officials:—

Whereas the following ambassadors — Lamprias, Ainetos and Phegeus, Dorians of the Metropolis coming from Kytenion — have arrived from the Aitolian Confederation, bearing a decree from the Aitolians and a letter from the Dorians, by virtue of which — having explained the events that have befallen their homeland and speaking in a manner consonant with the contents of the letter — the ambassadors most zealously and eagerly exhort us to remember our kinship-relations (*syngeneia*) with them, that originate from the gods and heroes, and hence to refuse to tolerate that the walls of their homeland lie destroyed — since, they said, Leto, our city's founding deity, gave birth to Artemis and Apollo in our land and Asklepios was born in Doris to Apollo and Koronis daughter of Phlegyos son of Doros, and therefore, having established through this genealogy that they possess such divinely originated kinship-relations with us, they enjoy an interwoven kinship and relationship with us that derived from the heroes, as they showed by establishing the genealogy from Aiolos and Doros; and since, they also demonstrated, when colonists led by Chrysaor son of Glaukos son of Hippolochos left our land, Aletes, one of the Herakleidai, took care of them, because, they said, Aletes set out from Doris to help the settlers when they were being reduced by war, drove away the danger, and married the daughter of Aor son of Chrysaor — and so, having demonstrated through a great many other details the close goodwill that they had developed towards us from olden times, the ambassadors asked us not to tolerate that the greatest

<sup>2</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, xxxviii (Amsterdam, 1988), text no. 1476. In this article, square brackets in quoted inscriptions indicate restored text; my own comments, therefore, appear in parentheses.





city in the Metropolis be thrown to the ground, but to give help for the rebuilding of its walls in so far as we find it possible, and to make conspicuous to the Greeks the goodwill which we have towards the Aitolian Confederation and the Kytenians' city by helping them in a way that is worthy of our ancestors and ourselves: and they said that, by listening to them in this matter, we would please not only them, but also the Aitolians and all the other Dorians, and especially King Ptolemy, since he is a kinsman of the Dorians by the Argead kings descended from Herakles.

Be it resolved to give them an answer to this effect: that all the Xanthians sympathize concerning the misfortunes which happened to the city, and believe it fitting to listen zealously to the things which the Kytenians urge because of the kinship-relations that originated with the gods and heroes, and because King Ptolemy, being a descendant of Herakles, traces his kinship back to the kings born of Herakles; and that, if it were not the case that the public finances of the city were in poor shape, the Xanthians would have made clear their goodwill and surpassed the others by their generosity; but that — since the public monies have been spent, since a great mass of debts has arisen, since a levy cannot be imposed on the citizens because of the voting of the nine-year budget, and since the richest of the citizens have recently made great contributions — in these current circumstances, about which we have spoken to the ambassadors, the city, for all these reasons, has no resources; but nevertheless thinks it terrible to tolerate that kinsmen should have fallen into such misfortune; and that (therefore) it was resolved: that the officials shall borrow money and give the ambassadors 500 *drachmai* for the walls of their city, and send them a hospitality gift as legally specified; that the officials shall inscribe the Aitolians' decree and the letter written by the *strategoi* (generals) and *sunedroi* (counsellors) on a stone *stèle* (inscribed slab) to be set up in the shrine of Leto, together with the letter sent by the Dorians to the city and this decree; that this (the decree) shall be given to the ambassadors; and that they shall be invited to a hospitality meal.

The document might provoke a wry smile in its reader, because of the palpable hopes and disappointment of the Kytenians (I hope they had better luck with the kings related to the Dorians via Herakles: Antiochos III, Ptolemy IV or V), and because of the Xanthians' determination, in spite of their excuses, to keep the affair in the realm of the symbolic, without many second thoughts. As the public inscription of the dossier shows, the Xanthians were rather pleased with their handling of

this business, and the temptation to regard their behaviour as cynical should be resisted.

The transaction between the Kytenian ambassadors and the city of Xanthos should be viewed in a context of similar, equally astonishing, gestures, performed on the international Hellenistic scene. In 208, the citizens of Magnesia on Maeander decided to honour their goddess, Artemis of the White Brow. A contest in her honour was to be recognized as 'sacred', the equivalent of the ancient and prestigious festival of the Pythia at Delphi, and the city and its territory were to become holy and *asylos* (literally 'inviolable'), free from any sort of ravaging or seizure by pirates or in the context of legal redress, individual or communal. This was achieved by speaking directly to the constituent parts of what the Magnesians perceived as the international community: at least twenty teams of *theoroi* (sacred envoys) went out in the spring of 208 to ask states individually for their acknowledgement of the contests as 'sacred' and of the city as 'inviolable'. Perhaps over two hundred states responded, for the main part Hellenistic cities, from Sicily to Iran. The responses were then publicly inscribed, on a single, massive 'archive wall' in the *agora*, the central public space of the city, in a great display of the Magnesia's civic esteem mapped out on the world. Some documents merely summarized, some quoted extensively (for instance, the decree of the city of Ithaka, detailing local civic life including a festival named after Odysseus). These responses are remarkably varied, yet also show that the cities were structurally homologous, shared basic concepts, and were deeply aware of this shared culture. The case of Magnesia is not unique. Around the same time, analogous campaigns were mounted by cities in the same part of the world (especially Teos or Kos): thus the phenomenon itself attests a shared culture of emulation and imitation.<sup>3</sup>

An examination of these city-states forms the heart of this article: the Hellenistic age, broadly speaking the two centuries after the death of Alexander (323–c.100 BC), was an age of city-states, *poleis*. It was many other things as well: an age of kings; and an age of elephants, gigantic warships, imperial processions,

<sup>3</sup> Kent J. Rigsby, *Asylia: Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, 1996), republishes and interprets the evidence. See *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander*, ed. Otto Kern (Berlin, 1900), plate II, for the rear wall of the West *stoa* (covered porch) in the *agora*.

and stupendous feasting and drinking. These aspects combine in a model of radical change after the watershed of Alexander's reign. But this is only one way of looking at the Hellenistic world: also, as A. H. M. Jones pointed out in 1964, there existed a strong network of self-governing, articulate, ideologically confident *poleis*, which covered much of the Hellenistic world and was crucial in determining the texture of this world.<sup>4</sup> It is not just a case of paying lip-service to the Greek cities *qua* 'cultural phenomenon': we must recognize the existence, and operation, of a system of autonomous communities, densely interconnected by a civic culture which sustained and depended on connections.

The forms such connections took have been studied in increasing detail: *sungeneia*, the language of kinship used to relate cities (as deployed so grandly, and so unsuccessfully, by the envoys of Kytention); inter-state arbitration; the recognition of a place's *asylia* (inviolability), freedom from spoliation and reprisals, obtained by piecemeal negotiation between a community and the rest of the world; the dispatch of *theoroi* from cities with famous shrines and festivals in order to announce these festivals to other cities, where these envoys were received by specially designated local notables (*theorodokoi*); and the practice of Hellenistic cities asking for arbitrators ('foreign judges') from other cities. To list, or even survey, all this material (roughly, and perhaps unilluminatingly, called 'Hellenistic diplomacy') would be a huge task. Yet the material is exciting in its directness and detail, and it has been studied with painstaking, exacting scholarship;<sup>5</sup> it could be matched by examples drawn from the archaeological record, which shows shared idioms

<sup>4</sup> A. H. M. Jones, 'The Hellenistic Age', *Past and Present*, no. 27 (Apr. 1964). See also Philippe Gauthier, 'Les Cités hellénistiques: épigraphie et histoire des institutions et des régimes politiques', in Chr. Pelikidis, D. Peppas-Delmouzou and Vas. Petrakos (eds.), *Praktika tou H' Diethnous Synedriou Hellenikis kai Latinikis Epigraphikis* [Acts of the Eighth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy] (Athens, 1983); Philippe Gauthier, 'Grandes et petites cités: hégémonie et autarcie', *Opus*, vi–viii (1987–9); Philippe Gauthier, *Les Cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs* (Paris, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> On *sungeneia*, see Olivier Curty, *Les Parentés légendaires entre cités grecques* (Geneva, 1995); Christopher P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999). On arbitration, see Sheila L. Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations in the Greek World, 337–90 BC* (Berkeley, 1996). On *asylia*, see Rigsby, *Asylia*. On *theorodokia*, see Paul Boesch, *Theoros: Untersuchung zur Epangelie Griechischer Feste* (Berlin, 1908); Paula Perlman, *City and Sanctuary in Ancient Greece: The Theorodokia*

(cont. on p. 13)

of civic monuments, public religious building, and private (although publicly exposed and civically minded) tombstones in the world of the Hellenistic cities.<sup>6</sup> The textual and material evidence is a mark of the broader system of civic interaction within and between communities; the assumptions and operations of this political culture still need to be articulated.

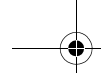
This article focuses on networks of interaction sustained by this culture. I wish to explore this grid of communication and meanings about a particular world by borrowing a concept developed by the archaeologists Colin Renfrew and John Cherry: 'peer polity interaction'. This model focuses on equipollent, interconnected communities, which must be considered *qua* network rather than by trying to differentiate between core and periphery.<sup>7</sup> In this article, I try to show that this model might help organize the evidence about the Hellenistic *poleis* into a single interpretive picture, which will illustrate the continued vitality not simply of the *polis*, but also of a whole network of peer polities. However, in order to adopt the terminology of 'peer polity interaction' various shifts in approach are required: from looking at patterns in the material record to reading texts and their values; and from explaining change to understanding stability. Tailoring the concept of 'peer polity interaction' and justifying the various shifts I apply to the model will lead me to examine the problem of change and stability (section III) as historical concepts, within the precise context of Greek history. Finally, I illustrate the broad usefulness of the concept of peer polity interaction (frequently but sporadically used by Classicists) for writing the history of the Hellenistic and the ancient Greek world generally (section IV). In sum, I wish to apply a concept drawn from archaeology to the writing of Hellenistic

(n. 5 cont.)

in the Peloponnese (Göttingen, 2000). On foreign judges, see Louis Robert, 'Les Juges étrangers dans la cité grecque', in *Xenion: Festschrift für Pan. J. Zepos*, ed. Ernst von Caemmerer *et al.*, 3 vols. (Athens, 1973), ??, repr. in his *Opera Minora Selecta: épigraphie et antiquités grecques*, 7 vols. (Amsterdam, 1969–90), v; Charles V. Crowther, 'Foreign Judges in Seleucid Cities (GIBM 421)', *Jl Ancient Civilizations*, viii (1993); Charles V. Crowther, 'Iasos in the Second Century BC III: Foreign Judges from Priene', *Bull. Inst. Classical Studies*, xl (1995).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Wörle and Paul Zanker (eds.), *Stadtbild und Bürgerbild im Hellenismus* (Munich, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Colin Renfrew and John F. Cherry (eds.), *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change* (Cambridge, 1986).



history, to think about the results, and to explore some of the theoretical and historiographical issues.

## II

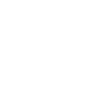
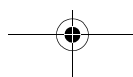
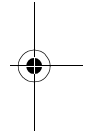
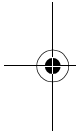
### FROM INSTITUTIONS TO MENTAL MAPS

Rather than attempt to survey all the inter-civic institutions, alluded to above, it may be most fruitful to describe one particular instance. The example illustrates not only the formality but also the sense of parity involved in these documents — in itself a further illustration of the concept of peer polity interaction. The institution in question is the recourse by a city, when faced with internal problems which the local courts could not resolve, to panels of ‘foreign judges’ summoned from another city, or other cities.<sup>8</sup> In 196 BC or thereabouts, the city-state of Iasos appealed to another city, Priene, for a team of arbitrators to help judge a backlog of controversial judicial cases. After the Prienian judges had carried out their duties, Iasos issued for each a long honorific decree, which was sent to Priene. The Prienians responded with decrees of their own, each answering one of the Iasian honorific decrees, and each quoting accurately and painstakingly the detailed provisions of the Iasian decree it answered and mirrored. All these Prienian documents ended by ordering the paired publication of Iasian and Prienian decree, the document from there and the document from here, in the permanent form of inscribed marble slabs, set up in the main shrine of Priene, the temple of Athena Polias. Some of these inscriptions still survive, and the transaction can be followed in detail.<sup>9</sup>

The transaction between Iasos and Priene, and generally the institution of requesting and sending out foreign judges, honouring foreign judges and acknowledging honours, illustrate in which institutions created pre-scripted interaction. Apart from offering formalized, reproducible templates for behaviour, institutions also provided the language in which behaviour should be appraised: both an actual language of words (especially *charis*, the gratitude or grace that undergirded benefactions and

<sup>8</sup> See Robert, ‘Les Juges étrangers dans la cité grecque’.

<sup>9</sup> *Die Inschriften von Iasos*, ed. Wolfgang Blümel (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, xxviii, Bonn, 1985), pt 1, no. 73, with Crowther, ‘Iasos in the Second Century BC III’.



honours), and a symbolic language of gestures and spaces. All the other institutional forms in the world of inter-*polis* interaction can be analysed in these terms (as well as being studied in their formal variations and concrete detail).

Interaction gave the occasion for a dynamic host of small concrete gestures such as cash presents (*xenion*, 'hospitality present', *ekecheiron*, literally the 'thing in hand'),<sup>10</sup> hospitality dinners, overnight stays, and the offer of the city's *ephebes* (military) to walk an embassy part of the way home.<sup>11</sup> Sometime in the mid second century BC, a Mylasan *theoros* representing his city at a festival on the island of Kos, took the occasion to make a distribution, probably of meat from sacrificial victims, to selected bodies in the Koan *polis* (magistrates, *epheboi* — that is, adolescents of citizen status and training in the *gymnasion* before becoming full citizens — and their teachers), but also to the *theoroi* from other Karian cities (Tralleis, Halikarnassos, Alabanda, Stratonikeia and Bargylia are the names that survive on the inscription). Parity was also a matter of such gestures of cordiality, which established fellowship between individuals representing their cities, and hence horizontal relations between the cities.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, but rather more alarmingly, the city of Chaleion in Lokris honoured a poetess from Smyrna, in c.218 BC: the lady received the usual honours, a gift of cash, and 'a share of honour from Apollo, a share of the [meat] from the sacrifice, to be sent to her from [our city to her] in Smyrna'.<sup>13</sup> Various bits of the text are restored, but the mention of Smyrna seems secure. So it seems that, along with the other honours, the poetess was to receive a chunk of meat, pickled or salted, fragrantly crossing the Aegean, as a travelling *geras* (token of honour).

In the course of such contacts, the various institutions could mesh and follow each other, leading to a strengthening of relations between cities: the Magnesian *theoroi* on their mission quoted decrees honouring their city, thus using past transactions to

<sup>10</sup> For an example of an *ekecheiron*, see Louis Robert, *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (Paris, 1938), ch. 11.

<sup>11</sup> For an instance of such hospitality practices, see *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander*, ed. Kern, no. 97.

<sup>12</sup> *Die Inschriften von Mylasa*, ed. Wolfgang Blümel (*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, xxxiv–xxxv, Bonn, 1987–8), text no. 118, with Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta*, iv, 108.

<sup>13</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, ii (Leiden, 1924), text no. 263.

facilitate and motivate present negotiation. The Magnesian dossier also illustrates how visiting *theoroi* would usually be named *proxenoi* (official guest-friends) by the city which received them; the existence of institutional forms allowed for instant strengthening of relations, and interaction was followed by honours, which entailed more interaction, in a spiral of communication between cities. One particular instance of this is the way dealings between a *polis* and an individual foreigner, especially if honorific and cordial, usually involved the individual's home *polis*. In the later second century BC, Polemaios of Kolophon, sent by his community to Smyrna as a *theoros*, stayed on to study: he was then honoured by the Smyrnians, who informed the Kolophonians of their decision by sending an embassy which escorted Polemaios home (duly prompting an honorific decree from the Kolophonians themselves).<sup>14</sup> Also in the second century BC, the community of Elis, in the Peloponnese, honoured a citizen of Tenedos residing in Elis; the decree was sent to the Tenedians, by the intermediary of a *theoria* (sacred embassy) on its way to Miletos to sacrifice at the festival of the Didymeia. The document illustrates contacts between *poleis* at the occasion of individual honorific transactions; furthermore, the conveying of the document is itself made possible by a culture of movement and interaction, because the Elis–Tenedos official communication piggybacks on another pre-existing inter-*polis* connection.<sup>15</sup>

Contact between communities, carried out by an individual, gave the occasion for further exchange, initiative and responses. Other examples are the decrees passed by cities for foreigners who came to help (for instance in rescuing citizens kidnapped by pirates or bandits),<sup>16</sup> and for foreign performers. The Xanthians, a decade after the Kytenian visit, honoured a rhetor from Ilion, one Themistokles son of Aischylos, for his performance and his behaviour which proved 'worthy of the kinship between us and

<sup>14</sup> Jeanne and Louis Robert, *Clarus I: Décrets hellénistiques* (Paris, 1989), 26–7.

<sup>15</sup> *Die Inschriften von Olympia*, ed. Wilhelm Dittenberger and Karl Pügold (Berlin, 1896), text no. 39. The exact geography involved is a little puzzling, since Tenedos, at the entrance of the Hellespont, is not exactly on the route between Elis and Miletos. Is the Eleian symbolic map of contacts unconcerned with actual geographical details, or did the Eleian delegation travel extensively along the coast of Asia Minor on sacred business (for example, sacrifice or festival announcement)?

<sup>16</sup> Anne Bielman, *Retour à la liberté, libération et sauvetage des prisonniers en Grèce ancienne* (Lausanne, 1994).

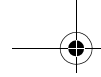
the Ilians': the Xanthians rewarded Themistokles with a token present of 400 *drachmai* (about the same sum that they had given to the Kytenian fund-raisers), inscribed their honorific decree, and sent a copy of the decree to Ilion, written not on papyrus but on stone (so that a small boat must have carried several hundred kilograms of honorific discourse up the entire coast of western Asia Minor).<sup>17</sup>

This meshing of institutions was possible because set forms of interaction and the shared language of honours helped to constitute a repertoire of gestures along acceptable lines of collaboration and recognition between peer entities, within a unified community of discourse. It did not always work: for instance, a first attempt by Magnesia on Maeander to achieve recognition for its shrine did not receive widespread acceptance; and the Kytenians' approach to the Xanthians received a response expressed in the shared civic idiom, but not the desired reaction (a large-scale grant of money). Nonetheless, the existence of the repertoire did mean that a city knew how to approach another, and where to find a point of entry when approaching another. Conversely, a city when approached knew at least how it ought to respond to the other city, whose words and motivation it professed to understand. If something more surprising should occur, such as the Kytenian fund-raising drive or the appearance in the old Ionian city, Teos, of an embassy from Tyre claiming closeness and perhaps even *sungeneia*,<sup>18</sup> the language and the gestures could still be drawn from a shared culture.

The existence of a shared culture is exemplified by the medium which most often documents it, and which itself should be called an institution, capping the other formalized avenues of interaction — the exchange of ambassadors, speeches performed by envoys from city A in the assembly of city B, and the exchange of decrees. I suggest we call this transaction by the name of the piece of evidence that actually documents it, namely the 'travelling decree': quite often, an honorific decree is found not in the city that produced it, but in another city which received an embassy, listened to speeches, and later finally inscribed the decree in its own civic space. This is the case for the Kytenian decree found at Xanthos, and the

<sup>17</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, xxxiii (Amsterdam, 1983), text no. 1184.

<sup>18</sup> On Tyre, see *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, iv (Leiden, 1929), text no. 601, with Curty, *Les Parentés légendaires*, 211–12.



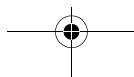
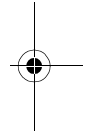
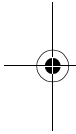
Iasian decrees inscribed in Priene. Strikingly, the first known document for a *polis* is often one of these travelling decrees.

The travelling decree, in mediating between city and city, embodies the nature of peer polity interaction not only as a concrete set of relations, but also as a symbolic and cognitive map. Decrees, speeches and institutions are predicated upon, and help to constitute, mental maps about the community and the 'other', both being conceived in close relation and mutual definition through similarity (rather than the polar opposites familiar from structuralist studies of classical Greek thought).<sup>19</sup>

Many of the formalized gestures between cities are based on such maps. When city A asks city B to inscribe a document in a particular shrine in city B, and to make a proclamation at the Dionysia, in the theatre, there is a shared knowledge between the two places, about what the sites and festivals of the *polis* are and how these work. More abstractly, when a city honours an individual and informs the individual's home town, and when a city praises an individual for his patriotism, assumptions and statements are being made, and knowledge is being enacted and perpetuated about the shared concerns of the cities involved, and indeed of every city.

The discourse of *sungeneia*, kinship, is another symbolic map: it is concerned with mapping self-knowledge and identity across place and time. When the envoys of Kytenion arrived in Xanthos, they wove a complicated story in order to link these two distant places together in a special relationship, via three levels of mythological narrative (original kinship, subsequent 'interweaving of kinship', which the Xanthians neglected to summarize in its no doubt dizzying detail, and story of aid granted by the Dorians in the heroic period). This example also points to the crucial role of literary or sub-literary activities in creating the mental maps: the speech given by the Kytenian envoys was a literary creation, drawing on the resources of myth and local culture to work out a network of relatedness.

<sup>19</sup> For structuralist studies of Greeks and 'others', see, for example, François Hartog, *Le Miroir d'Hérodote: essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris, 1980) [= *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley, 1988)]; Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Le Chasseur noir: formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec* (Paris, 1981) [= *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, trans. Andrew Szegedy-Maszak (Baltimore and London, 1986)]. See also John Ma, 'Black Hunter Variations', *Proc. Cambridge Philological Soc.*, xxxix (1994), for a take on this approach.



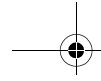
The local literature of the cities, with its emphasis on epichoric tradition and myth, its sense of place, and its registers of praise for specific localities (or its flip side of jokes and taunts), was not a result of antiquarian love for the obscure or the quaint, but a reflection of local identity and a possibility for interface with others; the speeches given by ambassadors, foreign judges and *theoroi* must be considered as part of local civic literature. Equally crucial was the role played by the littérateurs, the travelling rhetors, poets and artists who performed in the cities, and relations between cities, as discussed above. All these issues are exemplified in a pair of decrees passed by Cretan cities, where envoys from Teos perform kitharodic pieces drawn from local repertoire, before transacting their diplomatic business; as Angelos Chaniotis has put it, this was a world where diplomats sang and danced.<sup>20</sup> The *asylia* dossiers, inscribed at length in sites of high visibility in Magnesia on Maeander or Teos, are maps of relations between one place and a plethora of other, similar places: civic self-esteem is mapped out across an imagined homogeneous world of appreciative peers (see Map 1). The great list recording all the *theorodokoi* (official hosts of sacred envoys sent to each city) of Delphi is similarly about the city's place in the world, and the inscription of the vast document, apart from any practical, archival purposes, made visible a map of relations in a world of peers.<sup>21</sup>

A decree from Amphissa, in central Greece, illustrates the way peer polity interaction operates as cognitive map. This decree honours a doctor from a *polis* called 'Hyrkanioi Makedones', in Lydia.<sup>22</sup> The doctor, after performing various services for the Amphissians, asked them to communicate copies of their decree honouring him to other communities (the Skarpheis and the Opountian Lokrians), as testimonials. The document shows a network of local communities, in which evaluation by one community bears weight in its neighbours' eyes. Within this eminently local context, a foreigner from the other side of

<sup>20</sup> Angelos Chaniotis, 'Als die Diplomaten noch tanzten und sangen: Zu zwei Dekreten kretischer Städte in Mylasa', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, lxxi (1988), 154–6; generally, see Alan Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton, 1995), 47–53 and ch. 2.

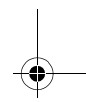
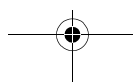
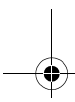
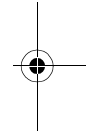
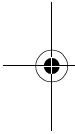
<sup>21</sup> A. Plassart, 'Inscriptions de Delphes: la liste des théorodokes', *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, xlv (1921).

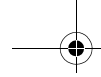
<sup>22</sup> *Inscriptiones Graecae*, ix, 2nd edn, ed. G. Klaffenbach (Berlin, 1968), pt 1, fasc. 3, text no. 750, first century BC.



the Aegean could find a place and move around. His community was a slightly odd one, with its two successive waves of military colonists: settlers from Central Asia installed by the Persian empire, and Macedonians installed by Antigonos Monophthalmos or by the Seleukids. Yet this community claimed the identity of a *polis*, and the doctor's identity was mediated through membership of this *polis*, which granted him a sense of place that was acknowledged abroad. This identity allowed him to fit into a local network of communities, because it proclaimed that he belonged to a world reassuringly familiar, to the point that this foreigner could be assigned the usual roles and attitudes of the deserving individual in his relation to a community.

All these symbolic maps do more than just reflect or participate in peer polity interaction: to a great extent, they *are* peer polity interaction. This is clear in the exchange of 'travelling decrees'. The transaction itself is about linking two cities in a special relationship; furthermore, the detail establishes here-and-thereness, the existence of two homologous communities whose relation and similarity can be played out. It is not just a matter of similarity of the political language and civic institutions. Communication and response establish parity: an official document from one city is answered by another document, strictly identical in nature, as the juxtaposed publication establishes. The second decree picks up the terms of the first with detailed observance of its terms, motivations and performative force: the first decree's decisions to praise and to crown are registered as duly accomplished and valid. In the mirror discourses of mutual honorific decrees, quotation is not an act of power but of recognition — in a linguistics of equality, not of negotiation. The two decrees also establish a wider context of mirrored civic ritual, thus creating a sense of relation and identity between the two *poleis*. The honours passed and (usually) proclaimed in city A for city B and its citizen b, are, upon the request of city A, also proclaimed in city B, in the same context of civic festival. The travelling decree creates a travelling proclamation: the same public words are uttered in twin contexts; listeners in either place are reminded of the other place, in a ritual of mutual recognition and performed civic knowledge about here and there. Finally, the documents involved in the 'travelling decree' transaction are published on twin *stelai*, one for each city, so that a citizen reader in one place will be made aware of

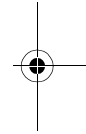
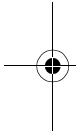




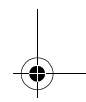
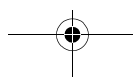
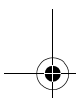
## PEER POLITY INTERACTION IN THE HELLENISTIC AGE 21

another *stèle*, bearing the same words he is reading, and creating the sense of parity and identity which I have tried to recreate in this paragraph. Civic speech, ritual, space, monument and memory are mobilized in order to create echoing, mirroring discourses of honour and of recognition, each city praising the other in terms of self-worth, imagining elsewhere in terms of here. Thus cities collaborated in writing about each other and themselves.

The civic culture shared by the Hellenistic *poleis* articulated parity; it also made ideological assumptions about the bodies involved in the ritualized interactions. The cities are assumed to be not only homologous in both organization and political culture, but also endowed with very specific local identities, which had to be referred to and deployed precisely and seriously. Playing on sameness and specificity lay at the heart of the discourse of peer polity interaction, which involved making claims to special relations between entities otherwise conceived of as similar. The *poleis* are further able to decide and to act: agency is proved by the existence of political institutions, authority, and actions determined by local decision-making bodies and implemented by answerable officials. The nature of the *polis* as state is acknowledged by other states: the great *theorodokoi* list of Delphi does not record every place where envoys stopped, but only those *poleis* recognized in a world of *poleis*.<sup>23</sup> Action, and the motivation to action, are described in moralizing terms: identity and memory, both recalled and created, lead to a politics of obligation, exchange and reciprocity. Even the Xanthians' rather discouraging reply to the Kytenians' request for cash is couched in this idiom — an illustration of its status as the acceptable medium for interaction between *poleis*. Actions and words are performed before an audience of peers; the documents constantly refer to the displaying of gratitude, via ritual and monumental inscription. Finally, the stability and uniformity of the whole system are mutually perpetuating, and taken for granted throughout.



<sup>23</sup> Louis Robert, 'Villes de Carie et d'Ionie dans la liste des théorodokes de Delphes', *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, lxx (1946), repr. in his *Opera Minora Selecta*, i; Paula Perlman, 'Theorodokountes en tais polesin: Panhellenic Epangelia and Political Status', in Mogens Herman Hansen (ed.), *Sources for the Greek City-State* (Copenhagen, 1995).



## III

PEER POLITY INTERACTION AND HISTORY: CHANGE, STABILITY  
AND THE *POLIS* IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

The phrase 'peer polity interaction' has started to slip easily under the pen or off the tongue of specialists of ancient Greece. I have applied it to organizing a particular body of material, the various ways of *polis* self-expression in the Hellenistic period. However, 'peer polity interaction' is also a specific concept, with precise questions of its own, as posed by the concept's creators. Renfrew and Cherry developed this model to describe and, importantly, to explain interaction and change, as a self-conscious alternative to a 'core-periphery' explanation. Such explanations posit a strong centre dominating a set of subordinate communities; change occurs at the centre, radiating to the periphery.<sup>24</sup> 'Peer polities', by contrast, are structurally homologous, autonomous states of same size, linked by networks of concrete and symbolic interaction, where change occurs across the board rather than in top-down diffusionist waves. In its hardest version, 'PPI' (to give it its official acronym) has pretensions to scientific status, claiming powerful capacities to explanation and even prediction.

The model is immediately evocative and stimulating for a student of the Hellenistic *poleis*, which live in a network of interaction, and can be shown precisely to have been structurally homologous, autonomous or at least self-administered states, of roughly equal size: the Hellenistic period exhibits clearly and in great detail<sup>25</sup> the existence of those specific elements and general conditions, which archaeologists must strive to establish or posit for the less well-documented periods of pre- or proto-history. In particular, Renfrew's insight that peer polity interaction can most fruitfully be studied as cognitive, mental maps illuminates the dense world of Hellenistic civic institutions and discourse. The Hellenistic material is textual in nature: what we are studying is the performing of the symbolic aspects of peer polity interaction in words.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Renfrew and Cherry (eds.), *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*.

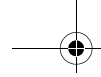
<sup>25</sup> Adalberto Giovannini, 'Greek Cities and Greek Commonwealth', in Anthony Bulloch *et al.* (eds.), *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> See Anthony Snodgrass's comments on peer polity interaction as a conscious phenomenon in Archaic Greece, in his 'Interaction by Design: The Greek City-State', in Renfrew and Cherry (eds.), *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, 56–8.

However, the concept of 'PPI' was defined by archaeologists working on periods where textual evidence is absent or problematic: most of the examples in the collection introducing the concept are about 'early states'. The borrowing from the archaeological to the documentary realm shifts the emphasis from change to stability. Renfrew insists that the study of peer polity interaction does not merely show widespread contact, but traces and explains change: the 1986 book is entitled 'Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change' (my emphasis). While it is true that the network of peer contacts between Hellenistic *poleis* does explain certain institutional or material changes, these changes are less interesting to study than the structure and the functioning of the network. The study of 'mental maps', which Renfrew ends up by singling out as particularly important, and which the Hellenistic material allows us to see, is more about stability than change. So a small paradox emerges: peer polity interaction as a concept shows archaeologists looking for change and event-ness, and historians looking for stability and duration.

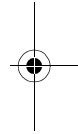
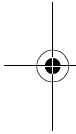
This shift can be extended back into the non-textual evidence. Andreas Linfert's recent study of the monumental altars built in the central shrines of several Hellenistic cities in Asia Minor and the islands argues that these monuments are not small-scale imitations of the spectacular altar built by the Attalid kings in their royal capital, Pergamon (c.160 BC?), but an independent phenomenon which occurred c.200 BC. This particular type of altar was developed in a network of cities, and spread, almost simultaneously (in archaeological terms, with due allowance for periods of building — within a few decades), because of close connectedness, interaction and emulation between the cities.<sup>27</sup> Instead of a centre-periphery model (big monument in royal capital and feeble local imitation), Linfert proposes a collaboration and development in a centreless network. Without explicit reference to the Renfrew/Cherry model, the case of the monumental altar illustrates the concept; however, the interesting point is not the explanation of the spread of these monuments, but the existence of the network, the interaction of the actors, the density of contact and the processes of solidarity. All these features added up to create a general

<sup>27</sup> Andreas Linfert, 'Prunkaltäre', in Wörrle and Zanker (eds.), *Stadt und Bürgerbild im Hellenismus*.



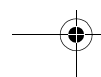
equilibrium which gave meaning to changes, such as the introduction of a particular type of physical structure.

The paradox (archaeologists focusing on event, historians studying duration) is pleasing, but only points to a major problem: how peer polity interaction, if focused on stability, is to deal with change, or, generally speaking, with history. At the broadest level, it is a function of history (though also of geography), that the relations which I have mapped out as homogeneous are in fact differentiated, according to proximity and length of relation. The uniformity of language covers a vast and diverse world: the same language is used for relations between Magnesia on Maeander and Antiocheia in Persis, and between Xanthos and Kyttenion. In what sense is there parity between Alabanda, a city in Karia, renamed Antiocheia by a Seleukid king, and the prestigious old Greek cities of Athens or Delphi, both of which received (quite favourably) an embassy from the Alabandeis?<sup>28</sup> The Delphic Amphiktiony also recognized Alabanda's *asylia*, praised the ambassador, and even allowed him to compete in one of the Delphic festivals, the *Soteria*, where he won a crown; all the same, it called the city of Alabanda 'related to the Greeks', rather than Greek — giving another factor for historical difference in the Hellenistic world, namely the different ethnic origins of many communities which interacted in Greek with the Greek world of cities (see the cases of Tyre or the 'Hyrkanian Macedonians'). In periodically sending out *theoroi* to announce the festival of the Pythia, the Delphians stuck to the 'Old Greek World', though including many Hellenized communities (such as Alabanda), keeping to the coasts. In contrast, the *theoroi* sent from Magnesia on Maeander went not only to the old Greek cities, but also to the new, royally founded cities in Babylonia and Persis.<sup>29</sup> The horizons of Delphi, one of the most prestigious and ancient Greek shrines, stayed within the parameters of the familiar Greek past; Magnesia on Maeander, though affecting great antiquity, had been refounded in the later Classical period, and was subject to the Seleukid empire, whose rule stretched eastwards (indeed, Magnesia had supplied colonists



<sup>28</sup> On Athens, see *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, xxviii (Amsterdam, 1978), text no. 75; for Alabanda, see *Orientalis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae*, ed. W. Dittenberger, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1903–5), i, text no. 234.

<sup>29</sup> On Delphi, see n. 23 above. For Magnesia, see Rigsby, *Asylia*, 179–279. See also Perlman, *City and Sanctuary in Ancient Greece*.



for the foundation of Antiocheia in Persis). Kos, Magnesia and Teos all requested recognition of *asylia* from an international network, but, in spite of considerable overlap, did not send to exactly the same places.<sup>30</sup> Xanthos answered the Kytenians in the realm of purely symbolic discourse rather than material expression of kinship ties, but warmly received a rhetor from Ilion, a city which helpfully interceded in support of the Lykians' appeal to Rome (see below): the uniform language of *sungeneia* covered qualitatively different types of action. 'Peer polity interaction' was not a single mental map: the patterns of interaction reflected the mental maps of different actors, each with their different priorities and histories; the next step may be to study the specific shapes taken by the construction of a networked world for each actor in this world.

More specifically, the picture I have given for peer polity interaction in the Hellenistic world has deliberately omitted the supra-*polis* powers, Hellenistic kings and regional leagues, and finally the intervention of Rome. These powers impinge only weakly in the account of institutions and symbolic discourse; yet their preponderance was obvious. The Kytenians, when they asked the Xanthians for help, hinted that this would gain them favour from two great powers: the Aitolian League, and King Ptolemy, the political master of Xanthos: the existence of superpowers is reflected in the language of horizontal relations. In political narratives of Hellenistic history, the kingdoms dominate the landscape, curtailing the local agency which the social narrative of the civic decrees was so determined to perform. This political dominance was both reflected and expressed at the cultural level: most notably, in the emergence of a particular cultural style at the Ptolemaic centre of Alexandria, and its powerful influence on the rest of the Hellenistic world. The new contests known as the Ptolemaia (founded by Ptolemy II and celebrated in Alexandria), were the first for which the Greek communities were formally requested to grant acceptance as 'panhellenic', that is, of equal importance to the ancient, prestigious contests in Delphi, Nemea, Olympia and the Isthmos. This status

<sup>30</sup> See Rigsby, *Asylia*. A later parallel is offered by the different constituencies of the oracular shrines of Klaros and at Didyma under the Roman empire. Though both were shrines of oracular Apollo, their catchment areas differed enormously; Klaros drew more particularly on communities from further afield and more recently Hellenized than did the ancient and prestigious shrine at Didyma. See Robert and Robert, *Claros I*, 4–6.

was later requested by several cities for their own main festival and contest: the example of Magnesia on Maeander and its *Leukophryeneia* (contest in honour of Artemis of the White Brow) has been discussed above. This specific transaction, though involving *poleis* in peer polity interaction, only emerged after a royal initiative, from the politically powerful and culturally resplendent centre of Ptolemaic Alexandria.<sup>31</sup>

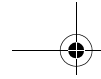
Furthermore, the Hellenistic world I have just described has no place for long-term, structural change, such as the changing landscape survey archaeology has revealed. As Susan Alcock has shown, the evidence seems to point to contraction and even depression in the later Hellenistic period, at least in mainland Greece; Asia Minor, on the other hand, seems to undergo different patterns, of stability or even expansion, at least in dynamic areas such as south-west Anatolia.<sup>32</sup> These fundamental long-term rhythms, which drastically affected landscape and city, are a major part of Hellenistic history, and one which peer polity interaction as a set of symbolic maps does not deal with. The later Hellenistic period saw the rise of ever more important elite individuals, whose power grew preponderant in many cities. Finally, to construct the Hellenistic world as peer polity interaction exclusively mediated by the particular language of the civic honorific decree is to neglect a different type of communication, driven by ecology and economics — the pan-Mediterranean world of diversification and connectivity proposed by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, with its various ways of shaping settlement and interaction.<sup>33</sup>

All these remarks insist on the seemingly ahistorical nature of the survey of ‘peer polity interaction’ sketched out above. Yet to call these phenomena ahistorical may be an exaggeration; as

<sup>31</sup> On the Ptolemaia, see Jeanne and Louis Robert, in ‘Bulletin épigraphique’, *Revue des études grecques*, xc (1977), 436–7, rubric no. 566. A good sense of Alexandria can be gained from the catalogue of a recent exhibition: *La Gloire d’Alexandrie: 7 mai – 26 juillet 1998* (Paris, 1998).

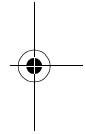
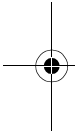
<sup>32</sup> Susan E. Alcock, ‘Breaking Up the Hellenistic World: Survey and Society’, in Ian Morris (ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge, 1994); F. Kolb, ‘Stadt und Land im antiken Kleinasien: Der Testfall Kyaneai’, in J. H. M. Strubbe, R. A. Tybout and H. S. Versnel, *Enegeia: Studies on Ancient History and Epigraphy Presented to H. W. Pleket* (Amsterdam, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000). Emily Mackil applies the ecological and geographical approach to the study of regional interaction in her recent dissertation, ‘Koinonika’ (Princeton Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2003); she examines in illuminating detail specific cases of the emergence and the workings of regional entities.



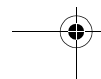
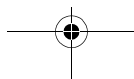
## PEER POLITY INTERACTION IN THE HELLENISTIC AGE 27

always when studying the Hellenistic world, everything turns on perspective and scale. The interaction takes place within stable frameworks, but is not necessarily static or ahistorical. The discourse of interaction constructs events out of communication and honours; these are all events, which are caused by, and part of, local identity. The existence of a roster of social roles both referred to past stories and channelled action into reproducing these roles, in order to produce further stories of interaction. Events need not be purely sociable or cordial: peer polity interaction could also find its expression in local disputes, neighbourly hostility (inherited, as was cordiality), negotiation by violence, or even outright war between *poleis*.<sup>34</sup> Local warfare also expressed local memory and identity: one of its main causes was the resolution of border disputes, and hence the negotiation of the physical boundary between two structurally similar *poleis*, each endowed with its own way of remembering its physical shape and relation to its neighbour. These conflicts were often settled by arbitration or mediation, which mobilized whole segments of the network (just as the summoning of foreign judges or the announcement of a festival did). The neighbouring cities of Miletos and Magnesia fought a war in the 180s BC, which was followed by a complex peace treaty, brokered by a host of cities, which sent a total of thirty-two envoys to 'reconcile them (the Magnesians and Milesians) and restore the original friendship'. These envoys came from Rhodes (the neighbouring power), Athens (with ancestral ties to the Ionian cities, including Miletos and Magnesia), Knidos, Myndos, Samos, Halikarnassos, Kaunos, Iasos, Teos (all neighbours), Kyzikos (a Milesian foundation located on the Propontis, the modern Sea of Marmara), the Achaian League (in the Peloponnese), and three cities in this League (Megalepolis, Antigoneia and Patrai). Settling a regional conflict between two *poleis*, in the lower Maeander valley, involved thirteen *poleis*, brought together from near and far by the various connections that made up peer polity interaction (see Map 2).<sup>35</sup>



<sup>34</sup> John Ma, 'Fighting Poleis of the Hellenistic World', in Hans van Wees (ed.), *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (London, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Albert Rehm, in Georg Kawerau and Albert Rehm, *Das Delphinion in Milet* (Milet: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899, i, fasc. 3, Berlin, 1914), inscription no. 148. On date, see R. M. Errington, 'The Peace Treaty between Miletus and Magnesia (I. Milet 148)', *Chiron*, xix (1989).



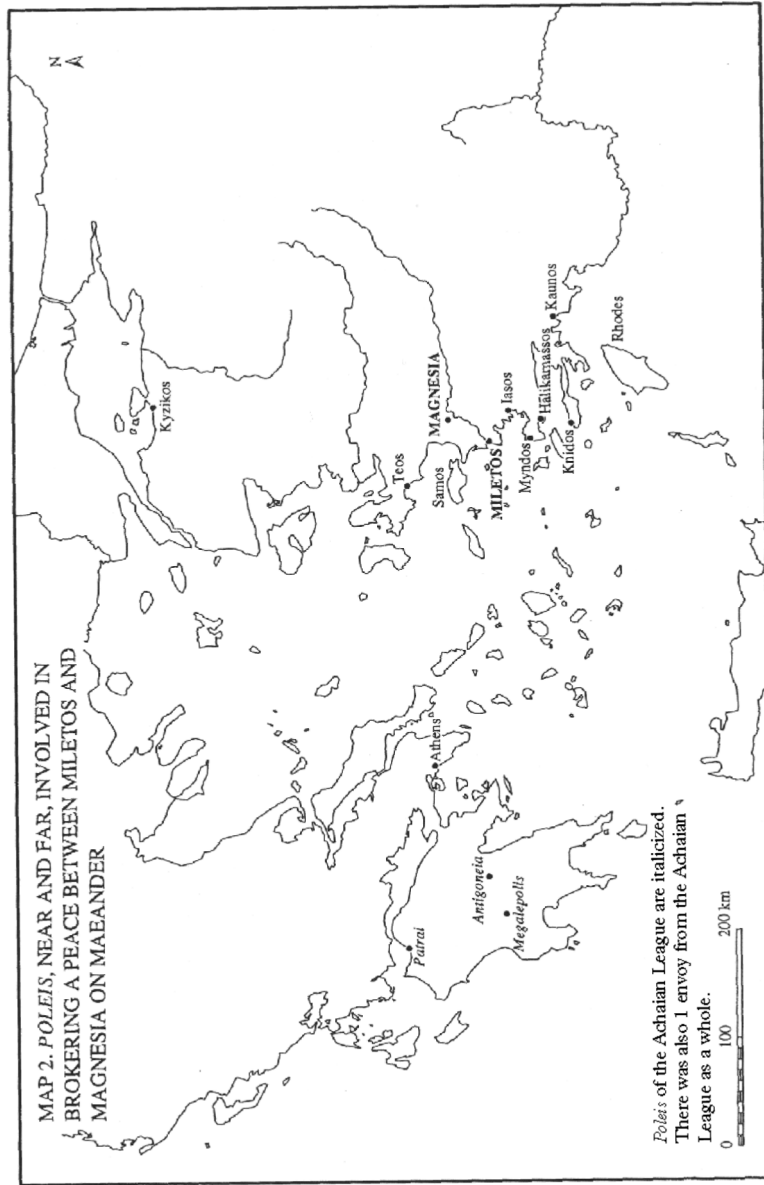
When envoys came to the kingdoms and leagues asking for recognition of *asylia*, they went to every constituent city of the supra-*polis* formation: the latter was made up of cells which were plugged into a broader network, even if (or because?) they were politically subordinate to a higher power. The geography of the supraregional imperial state, and that of the supra-*polis* regional entity, were superimposed on a geography of networked *poleis* which transcended the borders of kingdom or regional league, entities which they often helped constitute. Diplomatic transactions at the *polis* level took place even in the Antigonid kingdom of Macedonia, where the local cities were integrated closely, through municipal institutions, into the royal state.<sup>36</sup> *Poleis* could be, and very often were, subsumed within various political formations; they still existed as bodies capable of decision and agency, were acknowledged by others as such bodies, and participated within the institutions, social roles and mental maps of peer polity interaction.<sup>37</sup>

A major part of the interest of peer polity interaction in the Hellenistic period is precisely its nature as *histoire immobile* written in symbolic languages of honour and exchange. The ahistorical nature of the network's operation is a direct function of the cities' discourse: the mental maps, ritualized gestures and stereotypical language forged 'symbols of statehood created for mutual recognition', to quote Karim Arafat and Catherine Morgan on archaic Greek *poleis*.<sup>38</sup> Peer polity interaction was a collective work, a world willed as homogeneous because there were so many competing ways of constructing and living this world. A mesh of strong horizontal connections of collaboration, assertion

<sup>36</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, xliii (Amsterdam, 1993), text no. 369, with Miltiade B. Hatzopoulos, in Laurent Dubois (ed.), 'Bulletin épigraphique', *Revue des études grecques*, cxiii (2000), 520–2, rubric no. 453.

<sup>37</sup> Mogens Herman Hansen has written against the use of peer polity interaction to study the *polis* — 'Poleis and City-States, 600–323 bc: A Comprehensive Research Programme', in David Whitehead (ed.), *From Political Architecture to Stephanus Byzantius: Sources for the Ancient Greek Polis* (Stuttgart, 1994), 13 — because some cities were not independent, and many cities belonged to broader organizations (regional leagues or empires). The latter point is obvious. But Hansen's broader assertion is wrong, because the *poleis* existed and interacted in ways that made them the basic building blocks in their world, precisely at a symbolic level where supra-*polis* political authority did not impinge; formal autonomy matters less than agency and autarky, performed and recognized by other cities. See F. W. Walbank, 'Were there Greek Federal States?', *Scripta Classica Israelica*, iii (1976–7).

<sup>38</sup> Karim Arafat and Catherine Morgan, 'Athens, Etruria and the Heuneburg', in Morris (ed.), *Classical Greece*, 132.



and recognition was an eminently desirable thing in a world of powerful vertical pressures tending towards integration and subordination. The existence of a network of dialogue between cities meant that the relation between any local community and a ruler was never exclusive, because the local community also participated in a world of *polis* relations, with its language and its politics. In order to achieve local consent, supra-*polis* powers often needed to speak in a language which originated in transactions between cities, and which was not monopolizable by the ruler.<sup>39</sup> To a considerable extent, the protocols of peer polity interaction shaped the parameters of superpower behaviour. This would prove true even when the Roman republic, the ancient ‘hyper-power’ was involved in the Hellenistic world: its interventions were often reluctant, and, in practice, could only take forms accepted and suggested by local actors — the forms of ‘Hellenistic diplomacy’ which I have studied using ‘peer polity interaction’.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the discourse of kinship, a source of cultural capital and a means to locate oneself in a world of peers, also acted as a resource in high politics. In 196 BC, the citizens of Lampsakos made an appeal to Rome where the language of kinship is apparent (the Lampsakenes were kinsmen of the Ilians — supposedly the ancestors of Rome). In the same year, the Xanthians, in honouring an Ilian rhetor, mentioned their relationship of *sungeneia* to Ilios; eight years later, during the Roman settlement of Asia Minor, the Lykians appealed to the Ilians to intercede for them with the Romans.<sup>41</sup> When the citizens of Elateia were expelled by the Aitolians, in the 190s, they took refuge in the city of Stymphalos, which took them in because of a relationship of mythical *sungeneia*. The relation, and the historical obligation, were again called upon in 146, when Arkadians from the army of the Achaian League, at war with Rome, retreated past Elateia. However, in this particular case, the Elateians finally decided not to shelter their Arkadian ‘kinsmen’: at times, the

<sup>39</sup> John Ma, *Antiochus III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>40</sup> This is the thesis of Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley, 1984).

<sup>41</sup> *Die Inschriften von Lampsakos*, ed. Peter Frisch (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, vi, Bonn, 1978), text no. 4, trans. M. M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Cambridge, 1981), no. 155.

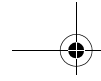
network of horizontal relations could buckle under the terrible pressure of events.<sup>42</sup>

Peer polity interaction further ensured that local elites would remain embedded in their cities, by universalizing the assumption that the main site for individual honour was the community. As seen earlier, honours for a foreigner were communicated to his own city: the individual could cash in honours from foreign cities in his own, but also was directed back to his own community by other communities. This function of peer polity interaction is strikingly illustrated by a particular type of epigraphical document, the so-called *Ehrentafel*: a single *stèle* which lists, and often illustrates, all the honours obtained by an individual across a network of *poleis*, local and faraway.<sup>43</sup> Cities collaborated in creating a context of civic culture and locally meaningful honours, within which they could locate the identities of individual big men, and hopefully constrain them. Both inside and outside any individual city, local elites encountered the same discourse of local patriotism, community recognition and reciprocity. The 'rise of the powerful individuals' has been charted as a significant development in ancient Greek culture, from the fourth century onwards; especially in the later Hellenistic period, the civic elites grew preponderant in their home *poleis*.<sup>44</sup> Yet peer polity interaction shaped their identities within civic parameters: it allowed *poleis* to resist any process of disengagement of their elites, particularly any definition of the elites outside the social roles and symbolic maps deployed by the *poleis*. Both the case of the local elites and the role of *sungeneia* in high politics, show how peer polity interaction acted as a projection of the Hellenistic *polis*, with its issues, its problems, its civic culture

<sup>42</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, xxv (Leiden, 1975), text no. 445; Pausanias, vii. 15. 5–6; Christian Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, 1998), 67–9.

<sup>43</sup> Karl Buresch, 'Die griechische Trostbeschlüsse', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, xlix (1894), 424–5; *Die Inschriften von Sestos*, ed. Johannes Krauss (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, xix, Bonn, 1980), texts nos. 2–4; *Die Inschriften von Alexandria Troas*, ed. Marijana Riel (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, liii, Bonn, 1997), text no. 613. A similar genre is that of the statue base which lists, among other attributes of a person's identity, honours from foreign communities: *Lindos*, ii, *Inscriptions*, ed. Christian Blinkenberg (Berlin, 1941), texts nos. 189, 195, 338; *Nuova silloge epigrafica di Rodi e Cos*, ed. Amedeo Maiuri (Florence, 1925), text no. 18.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Veyne, *Le Pain et le cirque: sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris, 1976); for nuanced appreciation, see Gauthier, *Les Cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs*.

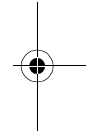
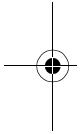


and its determination — in other words with its politics, into the history of the Hellenistic world.

#### IV

##### CONCLUSION: HISTORIES OF THE GREEK WORLD AND/AS PEER POLITY INTERACTION

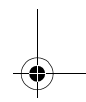
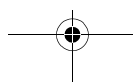
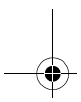
If peer polity interaction in the Hellenistic world is a historical phenomenon (peer polity *in* history), it also has a history of its own, notably the history of the constitution of the network which flourished in the Hellenistic period, its relation to the *polis* of the Classical period, and its subsequent fate. To treat this history will require assembling a chapter in the still unwritten history of the Greek *polis*, from its origins to Late Antiquity, in its complex nature, and away from the super-cities, Athens and Sparta (the most richly documented cases, and powerfully attractive as idealized communities in ancient times already).<sup>45</sup> Networks of contact, near and far, may have played as important a role as internal developments and negotiations in the emergence of the archaic *polis*;<sup>46</sup> indeed, in the study of the ancient Greek world, ‘peer polity interaction’ was first applied to the archaic period and its issues of social change.<sup>47</sup> Both the documentary record (sparse in the earlier parts of Greek history) and the main historiographical sources for the archaic and Classical periods, Herodotos and Thucydides (who apart from their master narratives of war and imperialism, also provide multiple, densely detailed, local narratives) prove the existence of *poleis* and networks: local warfare, negotiations and agreements recorded in permanent form and set up in international shrines, festivals, sacred delegations to and from nodal points, individuals on paths structuring and structured by symbolic maps between communities — a history of obligation and



<sup>45</sup> Philippe Gauthier, *Symbola: les étrangers et la justice dans les cités grecques* (Nancy, 1972), can be read as a history of the Greek cities through their peer relations.

<sup>46</sup> Catherine Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century BC* (Cambridge, 1990); Nicholas Purcell, ‘Mobility and the Polis’, in Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (eds.), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford, 1990); Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making, 1200–479 BC* (London, 1996). For a parallel, note Tim Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c.1000–264 BC)* (London, 1995), on peer polity interaction in Italy.

<sup>47</sup> Snodgrass, ‘Interaction by Design’.



reciprocity between these communities.<sup>48</sup> This world is closely related to that of Hellenistic peer polity interaction. Archaic migration fostered links between old Greek cities and newly founded communities; these links were referred to in later periods. The small island *polis* of Thera sent envoys in the late fourth century BC to remind the wealthy city of Kyrene of the latter's origin as a Theran foundation three centuries earlier (the Theran embassy seems to have produced what it claimed was the original oath of the settlers, which the Kyreneans in turn inscribed); in the second century BC, the city of Apollonia on Rhyndakos sent an embassy to renew its ancestral ties with Miletos, which had founded it.<sup>49</sup> These continuities suggest that what is exceptional about the Hellenistic period is the amount of evidence (albeit in the self-consciously monumental form of public inscription), rather than the nature of the phenomenon.

However, the Classical age also underwent violent, disruptive episodes of imperialism. It is true that the Classical hegemonic systems emerged out of the networks of interaction. The Peloponnesian League probably arose from negotiations between the powerful city-state of Sparta and each of its neighbours (Herodotos, I. 65–8); the beginnings of the Athenian empire took the form of contacts motivated by *sungeneia*, mythical kinship between cities (Thucydides, I. 98). But in practice, the Peloponnesian League and the Athenian empire tended towards the conversion of peer polity interaction into a centre–periphery system; their mode of interaction, both with each other and with subordinate communities, was not easily constrained by peer polity norms. Military alliance turned from exchange of promises between peer powers to prestations offered to the hegemon, Spartan or Athenian; festivals in Athens changed from occasions for intra- and inter-communal display to manifestations of central, imperial power. Two famous episodes which led to the Peloponnesian War can be seen as the interference between imperial system and peer polity interaction. In 433,

<sup>48</sup> For further detail on agreements made, see *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC*, revised edn, ed. Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (Oxford, 1988), text no. 10. On reciprocity in general, see Gabriel Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge, 1987); Lynette Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435–323 BC* (Cambridge, 1997).

<sup>49</sup> Meiggs and Lewis, *Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, text no. 5; Curty, *Les Parentés légendaires*, text no. 58.

Athens intervened in the fraught relations between Corinth, Corinth's colony Corcyra, and Corcyra's colony Epidamnos: these three actors were linked by *sungeneia*, partly acknowledged but leading to escalation, and the appeal, by Corcyra, to the Athenian superpower (Thucydides, I. 25–55). Similarly, Corinth had always sent officials to one of its colonies, Potidaia, in the Chalkidike: the link of colonization, one of the elements of *sungeneia* between cities, is expressed in formal institution terms. But, confusingly, Potidaia also paid tribute to Athens, as part of the Athenian empire. After Athenian involvement in the dispute between Corcyra and Corinth had led to an *accrochage*, the Athenians attempted to remove the contradiction between imperial domination and peer relations by severing all links between Corinth and its colony, Potidaia; the latter revolted from the Athenians, prompting a military response from Athens and further conflict with Corinth, and contributing to the discontent which Thucydides saw as the trigger to the great superpower conflict between Sparta and Athens (Thucydides, I. 56–66). During the Peloponnesian War itself, two small *poleis* referred to such values as past obligation or kinship, only to see their appeals or hopes fail horrendously: Plataia, whose appeal to past benefaction towards Sparta and to its place in a prestigious shared history (the Persian Wars) did not protect it from destruction by the pragmatic Spartans; and Melos, whose kinship with Sparta did not move the latter power to save Melos from being wiped out by the Athenians.<sup>50</sup> Hegemony offered an alternative model to peer polities: after Thebes liberated itself from Spartan control in 378 BC, it embarked on a programme of local imperialism (crushing those regional peers which had constituted the old Boiotian League — a good example of a local network of cities), and made an attempt at supraregional hegemony.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> On Plataia, see Thucydides, II. 12, 71–8, 52–68; on Melos, see Thucydides, V. 85–116.

<sup>51</sup> On the history of the early fourth century BC, and the contested hegemony, see Paul Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (London, 1987). Interaction between the various communities in Boiotia had earlier included violent competition for territory and aggression, so that the Thebans' imperialism grew out of a context of peer polity interaction, which Thebes came to dominate and transcend: see the findings set out in John Bintliff, 'Pattern and Process in the City Landscapes of Boiotia from Geometric to Late Roman Times', in Michèle Brunet (ed.), *Territoires des cités grecques* (Athens, 1999).

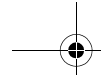
Yet, by the end of the fourth century BC, attempts at hegemony by any of the Greek *poleis* proved failures, and high politics, with its rising, murderous stakes and its increasing demand on resources, ended up beyond the reach of the city-states — as the preserve of superpowers such as the Macedonian kingdoms or the regional leagues (the Achaians and the Aitolians). The interaction of the cities in the late fourth century and the Hellenistic period built on continuities of institution and discourse, in order to make a history which was both local and international, strongly horizontal, based on reciprocity and memory. In this process of defining actors and relations, festivals and shrines such as Delphi played as important a role as they had in the Late Geometric and archaic periods.<sup>52</sup> This network of relationships is a striking feature of the third century, which was also the age when the Hellenistic kings were at their most powerful and determined the high politics of the period. Yet the kings passed, and the *poleis* abided. In the second century, as the kingdoms declined and Rome's influence grew, the network would survive and flourish: the second and early first centuries BC are an age of vigorous peer polity interaction.<sup>53</sup> Peer polity interaction would continue into the Roman empire, which in the East prolonged, in so many ways, the Hellenistic world.<sup>54</sup> The Classical period, at least as concerns its noticeably harsh political history dominated by Athens and Sparta, appears as an anomalous interlude in a continuum of peer polity interaction.

For all their durability, the networks of peer polity interaction did not exist as a perfectly homogeneous matrix (the latter is itself a symbolic map). Geography and history determined particular areas of density, regional webs of relation and shared experience. Furthermore, various nodal places exercised a powerful pull over determined regions: Delphi, the great international shrine, which may have served as a nodal point for exchange

<sup>52</sup> On Delphi's role in creating an international scene, see Pierre Sánchez, *L'Amphictionie des Pyles et de Delphes: recherches sur son rôle historique, des origines au II<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère* (Stuttgart, 2001).

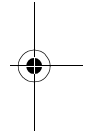
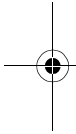
<sup>53</sup> For examples of the second-century network, see Robert and Robert, *Clarus I*; Wolfgang Günther, 'Milet und Athen im zweiten Jahrhundert v. Chr.', *Chiron*, xxviii (1998). Generally, see Wörle and Zanker (eds.), *Stadt und Bürgerbild im Hellenismus*; Alain Bresson and Raymond Descat (eds.), *Les Cités d'Asie Mineure occidentale au II<sup>e</sup> siècle a.C.* (Bordeaux, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> A. J. Spawforth and Susan Walker, 'The World of the Panhellenion: I. Athens and Eleusis', *Jl Roman Studies*, lxxv (1985).

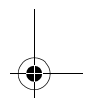
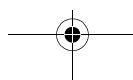
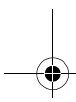


and contact; and Athens, once an imperial power, whose cultural prestige and economic weight remained considerable after the loss of superpower status, especially within the Aegean islands and Asia Minor. Athenian institutions and political forms seem to have spread in the Hellenistic Aegean and Western Asia Minor.<sup>55</sup> To say this is not to reintroduce centre and periphery, but simply to observe the possibility for a differentiated history to exist, and to be written, within the framework of peer polity interaction, which itself can be mapped over time and space, with its multiple ways of articulating experience, and its specific shapes: as I attempted to show above, the apparently stable processes of peer polity interaction can be embedded in the event-rich history of the Hellenistic period.

Another example of the historical nature of peer polity interaction, and also of the contribution that 'PPI' as a concept makes to writing about history, is the participation of initially non-Greek communities in the network of Greek *poleis*. This phenomenon is sometimes described with the portentous term 'Hellenization', though the word in itself describes and explains nothing. One such instance is Tyre, which (as mentioned above) approached Teos as a kindred city; Xanthos was a Lykian city, and had once issued documents in Lykian in the late fourth century: how did it become a kindred city to the prestigious Dorians? In Hellenistic Anatolia, a very large number of local communities suddenly emerge in the epigraphical record as Greek *poleis*, with standard institutions and a Greek political language. The mechanism for this phenomenon might be termed 'quasi-PPI': Greek cities interacted not only informally but also through formal diplomatic media with non-Greek communities, such as Sardeis in Lydia, or Hanisa in Kappadokia. Imitation, and the attraction of the network of cities, account for the adoption of political institutions. The points of contact can usually be traced because of the particular names of these institutions: Ionian in Karia, but southern Anatolian Hellenized institutions in Kappadokia. The process can be seen at work explicitly for the case of Sardeis which, in the fourth century BC, had diplomatic dealings with Miletos: the existence of institutions in the non-Greek community is recognized by the



<sup>55</sup> P. J. Rhodes with David M. Lewis, *The Decrees of the Greek States* (Oxford, 1997), for a survey of Classical and Hellenistic political institutions.



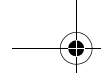
Greek city, and repeated contact might lead to the Sardian elites adopting forms for interaction with Greek quasi-peers.<sup>56</sup>

In the preceding pages, the concept of peer polity interaction has been applied to a particular historical context — rather loosely, especially as regards the original concern with explanation and change. But part of the concept's richness is precisely that it escapes the original research agenda. The shift from archaeology to text entailed a shift towards process and institutions, and hence stability (whereas the archaeologists claimed events and change as their main focus); the texts particularly allowed the study of the cognitive maps of peer polity interaction. But these maps, and more generally the processes of interaction, can be studied historically, as reactions to change, or part of broad historical phenomena.

The concept provides a fertile way of gathering evidence for the Hellenistic cities, and also for writing Greek history, especially in helping us articulate an awareness of the importance not simply of the *polis*, but of the whole network of *poleis*. A good example of the impact this awareness can have is the case, already discussed above, of the large ornamental altars. If Linfert is correct in seeing the emergence of this form not as a reaction to a single, prestigious monument created in a royal capital, but as a type created collectively in a system of cities and later copied in the royal capital with the lavish resources of a royal state, the consequences are important for the study of Hellenistic art, which is too often driven by purely stylistic or aesthetic considerations, and still too unaware of the world of the Hellenistic *poleis*.<sup>57</sup> Peer polity interaction was a cultural phenomenon; apart from the visual arts, it found its expression in the production of literature and learning. As with Hellenistic sculpture, the operation of peer contacts as a site for literary works, produced for local uses and predicated on local knowledge,

<sup>56</sup> On Sardeis, see Philippe Gauthier, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes II* (Geneva, 1989), 160–5, for interpretations of *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, ed. Dittenberger, i, no. 273, and *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, i(a), ed. Herrmann Wankel (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, xi, pt 1, Bonn, 1979), text no. 2; but Gauthier minimizes the degree of organization of the non-Greek city interacting with its Ionian neighbours. On Hanisa, see Louis Robert, *Noms indigènes dans l'Asie-Mineure gréco-romaine: première partie* (Paris, 1963), notably 476–9 on the *demiourgos*, a magistracy found in southern Asia Minor, appearing in Hanisa.

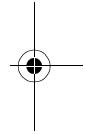
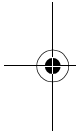
<sup>57</sup> For a very different view of Hellenistic art, fully taking into account the complexity and polycentric nature of the Hellenistic world, see R. R. R. Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture: A Handbook* (London, 1991).



problematizes any statements about Hellenistic ‘cosmopolitanism’ and antiquarianism. Alexandrian poetry and learning, and the concomitant cultural politics must be contextualized within local traditions of learning, as has been pointed out by Alan Cameron.<sup>58</sup> In the meantime, what remains is the crucial role played by peer relations at the level of the *poleis* in constituting the Hellenistic world — the performance of rituals and the uttering of certain words which took place every spring, when the cities prepared to send out or receive a plethora of ambassadors carrying decrees, practising speeches, bringing sacrificial victims, taking away little gifts: the spring of the Hellenistic *poleis*.

*Corpus Christi, Oxford*

*John Ma*



<sup>58</sup> Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics*.

