

N. K. PETROCHILOS: **Roman Attitudes to the Greeks**, Athens, 1974, 231 pp.

The interaction of feeling between Romans and Greeks in the late Republic and early Empire is a large and complex subject, interesting in itself and important for an appreciation of Latin literature and in general of Roman culture. Various aspects of the subject have been treated incidentally by scholars from time to time and it is to be hoped that one day a full treatment will appear, analysing from the earliest contacts of the two nations the cultural ferments and intellectual cross-currents and determining the nature and extent under the Principate of the synthesis at present vaguely called Graeco-Roman. It will then be possible to understand, for example, the differing types of 'philhellenism' of a Cicero or an Atticus, a Nero or an Hadrian, the hellenizing plagiarisms of Latin literary figures and the appeal of Greek systems of thought to Roman political and intellectual leaders in their full context.

Meanwhile, Dr. Petrochilos has produced a partial study, limiting himself to the Roman outlook and the Republican period and concentrating purely on the literary evidence. Consequently the epigraphical evidence, from which, for example, the attitudes of an important class of people, the Roman and Italian *negotiatores*, can be seen as they lent money at exorbitant interest-rates to impoverished Greek communities and then posed as benefactors when they eventually remitted the interest in the hope of recovering their capital, or as they co-operated with the Greek residents of Delos or shared the facilities of *gymnasia* and participated in agonistic festivals in Greek cities, is beyond the scope of this work, and although the acquisition of Greek works of art by Romans is discussed under 'Luxury and Moral Decline', there is little consideration of the Roman appreciation of Greek sculpture and *objets d'art*, which developed as quickly as the appreciation of Greek literature in the first century B. C. Within these self-appointed limits however the work covers a wide variety of topics (e.g. 'Luxury and Moral Decline', 'The Greeks and the Sea', 'The Aeneas Legend') each of which is almost an independent study in itself but all are carefully linked by being treated as parts of a more general whole.

Perhaps the most important basic contribution that Dr. Petrochilos makes is the simple but very necessary observation expressed by the plural 'Attitudes' in the title, since there was no single attitude nor even a consistency of attitude in any age or any individual Roman. Another important contribution is the brief but pertinent inquiry entitled 'The use and extension of the term *Graecus*', which forms the first chapter and which concludes with the perceptive remark: 'The concept of *Greek* has a certain flexibility which lends itself to the creation and exploitation of prejudices' (p. 21). — In this chapter, incidentally, (p. 18) one might question the interpretation of Juvenal's 'quota portio faecis Aethi? (iii, 61) and ask whether 'Aethi' does not refer to immigrants from the Greek mainland (or the Achaian province) rather than to those who were 'ethnically Greek'; the 'ast' after 'Sicyone' (*ib.* 69) seems to support this. — Again, the discussion of the Roman knowledge and use of the Greek language closes with the following valid conclusion: 'The pressure of Greek influence forces the Roman to search for his own identity and to become aware of the value of what belongs to him' (p. 33).

Broadly speaking, the Greeks were considered in different ways as a contempo-

rary nation and as the heirs of a great civilisation, and personal relations between Romans and Greeks obviously affected and complicated the Roman outlook. The elder Cato was a key figure in the development of attitudes, and Dr. Petrochilos rightly devotes space to a detailed discussion of his reactions to the traditional *paideia*. Cicero, of course, is the central and most important figure, and there is less on him *qua* Cicero than there might have been, although he is regularly quoted to illustrate points of all kinds; but to consider Cicero more fully would have distorted the balance of the work as a whole.

The central section of the work is devoted more generally to the moral and nationalistic outlook of the Romans resulting from the historical situation which found them so often in protracted dealings with Greek cities and federations. The chapter on Roman comparisons of Classical and contemporary Greece which is crucial for this section is quite short but well written. It is perhaps a pity that it was not within the scope of the work to consider the practical effects of democratic institutions and manners on the attitude of Roman politicians towards the Greeks of their own day. Here again other types of evidence corroborate the literary sources: in general, the Romans seem to have found Greek democracies repugnant, and the institution of oligarchies in Greece after 146 B. C. (and the confirmation by Sulla of a similar type of constitution in Athens after the Mithridatic War) expresses this attitude as clearly as any statement in the *pro Flacco*. Similarly, the chapter entitled 'The Greeks and the Sea' is good, so far as it goes; it might be added that the Romans were naturally suspicious of those who were superior to themselves in naval matters and adopted different attitudes as policy dictated — thus M. Antonius executed the Spartan Lachares but Augustus protected his son Eurykles. 'The Roman attitude to Greek military achievement' and 'Sentimental politics' are two good chapters — especially the latter — but the discussion of Livy's speculative digression on Alexander in Book ix (pp. 100 ff.) is sketchy and overlooks some of the important modern literature (e.g. P. Treves, *Il mito di Alessandro e la Roma di Augusto* [Milan - Naples, 1953]). Also, incidentally, it might be questioned how much actual 'enthusiasm' for Alexander (p. 103, note 2), rather than emulation, was felt or shown by Nero.

The later chapters are given to a discussion of 'Roman emulation of Greek culture and . . . their reservations in accepting it'. This section is sound in treatment and judgment, but since it deals with familiar subject-matter there is little scope for a new appraisal simply from the literary approach. For example, there is a good, straightforward account of the disapproval of Greek *gymnasia* found in certain Latin authors almost as a *locus communis* (cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 274 D); evidence from epigraphical sources, showing the participation of Roman families living in Greece would have modified this impression. These remarks, however, like others made above to the same effect, are not intended as an adverse criticism of Dr. Petrochilos, who writes as a literary scholar and from the literary point of view, but rather as an indication of the need for a more comprehensive treatment of this subject.

Within his own limits Dr. Petrochilos has produced a sound and useful work on which he is to be congratulated; it does credit both to the Greek State Scholarship Foundation and to the University and College in which he studied for his doctorate.

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