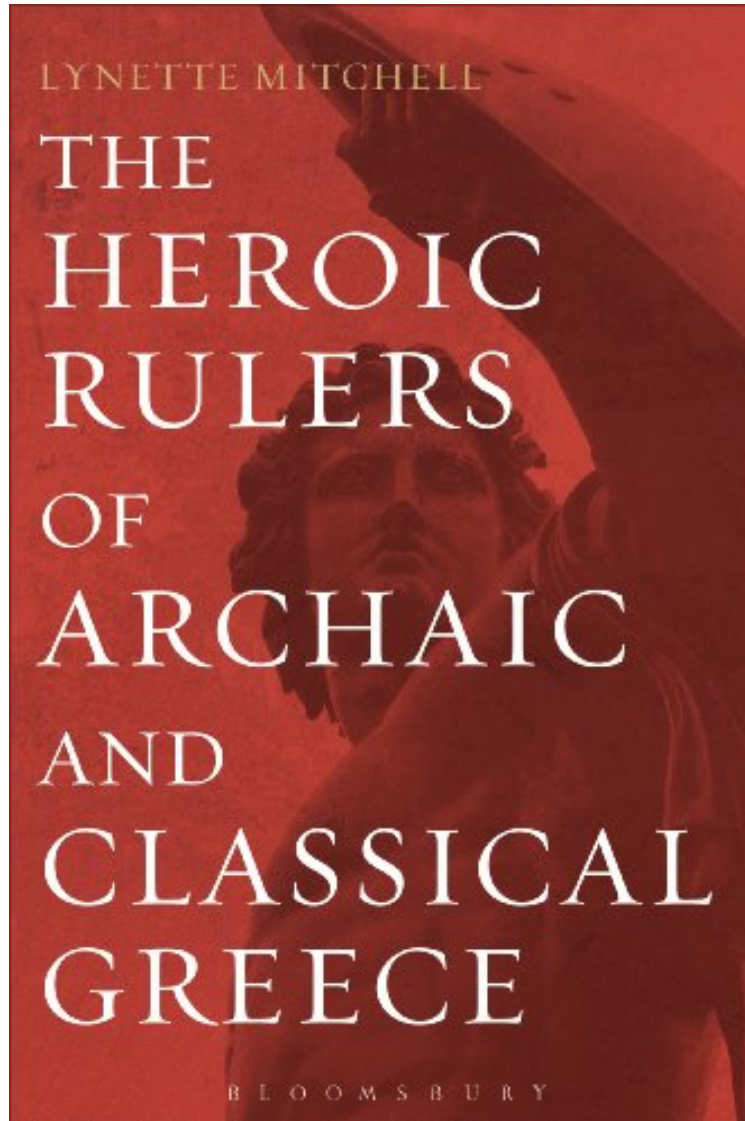


(Free download) The Heroic Rulers of Archaic and Classical Greece

The Heroic Rulers of Archaic and Classical Greece

Lynette Mitchell

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



 Download

 Read Online

#2883320 in eBooks 2013-08-01 2013-08-01 File Name: B00CSS395K | File size: 39.Mb

Lynette Mitchell : The Heroic Rulers of Archaic and Classical Greece before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Heroic Rulers of Archaic and Classical Greece:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Rule of One ndash; Heroes, Kings and TyrantsBy JPSThis is a very interesting and fascinating little with slightly more than 160 pages of text that is easy to read and therefore accessible, although scholarly. Essentially - and perhaps for a change ndash; the book's presentation summarises rather well its contents.The book does indeed challenge a number of views and myths that are at least partly derived from Ancient Greek sources and from Athenian ones in particular. One of these is that the rule of Kings disappeared from Greece, was superseded by oligarchies and democracies, and that the rule of one (or monarchy) made a comeback during the

fourth century BC in the form of tyranny. As the author shows rather well, the reality seems to happen more complex. Kingship (Basileia) was defined, or rather caricatured by reference to the Persian King of Kings. However, it had existed before in areas that were part of Greece and continued to exist throughout the classical period (Macedonia, but also Sparta). Also, and although presented as 'arch-villains'; in such ways that the term 'tyrant'; can only have very negative connotations nowadays, there was a link between tyrants, heroes and saviours of the city in a number of cases during both the 7th and 6th century BC and the 4th century. In the latter case, the typical examples are those of Denys I and Agathocles who both became tyrants of Syracuse and remained in power for decades at least partly because of their 'heroic' status as protectors and victors against Carthage. Another strongpoint is the author's ability to clearly show how monarchy was underpinned by a common heroic ideology among rulers based on aretē (loosely translated as excellence), and to what extent, even in monarchies and tyrannies, 'rule of one' was never exclusive and always somehow shared, or at least supported by the family or even the clan. A further component of the rule of one was its instability, or, perhaps to be more precise, the absence of any clear succession rules within the ruling clan or family, or even within the kingdom or city. Two examples that the author uses extensively are those of the Kings of Macedonia and the Kings of Sparta. In both of these cases, and in all other cases of 'one-man ruler', there was no hereditary primogeniture and there was no guarantee that a son would succeed a father since, by definition, the successor had to be 'the best'. In practice, this could mean the strongest, as Alexander's last words on his deathbed are supposed to have been when asked for the name of his successor, or, perhaps more cynically and in a more sinister way, the one who survived all of the other potential claimants. An additional key point is the author's effort in identifying the various components that sole rulers used to legitimise their rule. For instance, they were themselves heroes or belonged to a kin group descendant of a hero. They could also be law-givers, the ones who gave their respective cities their constitution and therefore, at least symbolically, were its founders. Interestingly, the author also shows how the relationship between ruling/power of one and law interacted and evolved, with the later ultimately becoming the main limitation and constraint of the power of one in an interesting reversal of causality. Clear, well-presented and well-written, even if not always fully convincing and sometimes 'cutting a few corners' because of its limited size, this little book is certainly a valuable contribution and an excellent starting point for anyone interesting in monarchy or tyranny during the classical, but also during the Hellenistic period. It is also, more generally, a valuable piece for anyone wanting to learn what monarchy, whether exercised by a King or by a Tyrant, meant for the Ancient Greeks, how the two differed and evolved, and how they compare to the modern notions that lurk behind the very same terms nowadays. Four strong stars.

With an in-depth exploration of rule by a single man and how this was seen as heroic activity, the title challenges orthodox views of ruling in the ancient world and breaks down traditional ideas about the relationship between so-called hereditary rule and tyranny. It looks at how a common heroic ideology among rulers was based upon excellence, or aretē, and also surveys dynastic ruling, where rule was in some sense shared within the family or clan. *Heroic Rulers* examines reasons why both personal and clan-based rule was particularly unstable and its core tension with the competitive nature of Greek society, so that the question of who had the most aretē was an issue of debate both from within the ruling family and from other heroic aspirants. Probing into ancient perspectives on the legitimacy and legality of rule, the title also explores the relationship between ruling and law. Law, personified as 'king' (nomos basileus), came to be seen as the ultimate source of sovereignty especially as expressed through the constitutional machinery of the city, and became an important balance and constraint for personal rule. Finally, *Heroic Rulers* demonstrates that monarchy, which is generally thought to have disappeared before the end of the archaic period, remained a valid political option from the Early Iron Age through to the Hellenistic period.

In this slim volume, Mitchell draws upon an impressive range of evidence in a series of focussed arguments intended to significantly revise our understanding of kingship in the Greek world - predominantly in the archaic and classical periods. -- Philip Davies, University of Nottingham, UK Bryn Mawr Classical Lynette Mitchell's lucidly written and discerningly argued book ... [is] supplied with an impressive bibliography (more than 500 entries) which in itself is a reward for the reader ... The book is full of ideas, sometimes unorthodox, and very often thought-provoking ... Not the least merit of the book is that it stimulates further debate on the relationship between rulers and elites as well as on the cultural strategies deployed by rulers to strengthen their power. GNOMON In the space of five very accessible chapters ... Mitchell turns a lot of modern scholarship on its head. ... [She] has gone further than her predecessors in laying bare the power relations of rulers, their families, and the ruled throughout Ancient Greek history. Classics Ireland In this crisply written and pleasingly accessible study, Professor Lynette Mitchell has caught a rich haul of personal and charismatic rulers of Greek states and peoples from Archaic to Hellenistic times. She detects a common ideological basis for their diverse regimes in claims to heroic heritage and values, and argues persuasively that monarchical but not absolutist modes of rule remained central to Greek political experience from Homer's Agamemnon to Aristotle's Alexander and beyond. -- Paul Cartledge is the A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek culture,

Cambridge University, UK In our fascination with the Greeks as inventors of republican and democratic government, we tend to forget that many Greek cities and states were ruled by monarchs for much of the time. Lynette Mitchell's brisk and confident survey shows that a wide variety of rulers from archaic tyrants to Macedonian and Molossian kings represents variations of a 'charismatic', family-based form of monarchical leadership that was characteristic of the archaic and classical Greek world and arose out of the same climate of 'competitive egalitarianism' that also gave rise to republics. This is a refreshing and important new perspective on Greek political history. -- Hans van Wees, Grote Professor of Ancient History, University College London, UK An impressive and groundbreaking treatment of the topic: Lynette Mitchell has undertaken a bold attempt to treat much-studied issues from a fresh perspective. -- Dr. Sian Lewis, University of St. Andrews, UK About the Author Lynette Mitchell is Professor of Greek History and Politics at the University of Exeter, UK. Her books include *Greeks Bearing Gifts* (1997) and *Panhellenism and the Barbarian in Archaic and Classical Greece* (2007).