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Christine G. Krueger, Martin Lindner, eds. *Nationalismus und Antikenrezeption.* Oldenburger Schriften zur Geschichtswissenschaft, vol. 10. Oldenburg: BIS, 2009. 177 pp. EUR 14.80 (paper), ISBN 978-3-8142-2145-8.

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Through a Glass Darkly

A major function of historical writing outside of professional circles is to ratify a society's contemporary social and political order, and to thereby support the common aspirations of both rulers and intellectual elite. As the editors of *Nationalismus and Antikenrezeption* note (p. 14), antiquity is an attractive epoch that offers a host of justificatory narratives for modern countries and ethnic groups. The relative paucity of ancient sources allows the ideologue substantial leeway in fashioning national myths. This volume seeks to remedy that problem with its welcome collection of primary source materials assembled by participants at a University of Oldenburg seminar.

Following the editors' introduction, which defines crucial terms (*Rezeption*, *Nation*, *Nationalismus*, etc.), there are nine chapters here composed by the students. Each of these chapters presents translations of relevant portions of classical (Greek and Latin) authors, generally borrowed from standard German editions of the texts in question. There are also excerpts from early modern to modern nationalistic writings based on these sources, a brief explanatory discussion, short bibliography, and study questions.

The subjects vary geographically and by topic, and present original sources within their larger historical and historiographical contexts. Some figures, who have achieved almost mythological status, belie their public, popular images. Thus Queen Boudica in Britain and Vercingetorix reappear as true historical actors, who, in their respective countries, have been at the middle of historiographical debates. Likewise, the tales of Hermann/Arminius that have played key roles in Germanic traditions receive much-needed, serious historical attention in these documents. Equally enlightening is the discussion of Ludwig Quidde's 1894 pamphlet *Caligula: Eine Studie über römischen Caesarenwahnsinn* (*Caligula: A Study of Imperial Insanity*), an implicit comparison between Caligula and Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Other chapters consider more recent uses of nationalist symbols and consciousness. For instance, primary source documents help explain how mobilization of support for the nineteenth-century Greek War of Independence successfully invoked the Persian Wars of the fifth century BCE. Likewise, documents and annotations demonstrate the use of traditions regarding the last stand of the 300 at Thermopylae in German propaganda in the wake of Stalingrad. Such recent uses of national founding myths abound, such as the dispute between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over the legacy of Alexander the Great. Other important examples include Nicolae Ceaucescu's pathetic summoning of the ancient Dacians to bolster enthusiasm for his tyranny in Romania, and Yigael Yadin's employment of the results of his excavations at Masada to create a foundation myth for the Israeli Defense Forces.

In the final chapter, the editors discuss nine further examples of national myths. Here, they treat the topics cursorily and without selections from primary sources. One might have wished for more extensive treatment of the Illyrians in Albania, or the hero Ambiorix in Belgium. The Bulgars and the Batavian Revolt of the Netherlands receive no real historiographical treatment; nor do the Lusitanians in Portugal, or the Battle of Mt. Graupius in Scotland. The additions of the final examples–the Iberians and contemporary regionalism in Spain, Celts in Wales and Ireland, and the legacy of the Roman Empire in Italian nationalism–might disappoint the reader. It is also true, however, that these topics need further, serious, historical investigation.

All in all, this is an interesting collection. The participants involved in this book should certainly be commended for many new insights, based in part on original, primary source documents. Yet, the seasoned scholar will find little new in the introduction. A few mistakes also

detract from the book's objectives: surely it was Joseph (and not Hermann) Goebbels who invoked the memory of Thermopylae in 1943 (p. 17); *The Gallic War* was written in 52 BCE, not CE (p. 43). Nonetheless, the chapter's bibliography and other unanswered questions throughout the book call attention to a few items off the beaten track that point to new areas of research. The splendid color photographs depicting monuments to the military leader Hermann of the battle of the Teutoburg Forest and other national heroes add texture to the book. Nonetheless, the majority of the book, intended as course material for use in a German university, is not appropriate for adoption in non-German-language classrooms. North American and other scholars would surely not expect undergraduate students to read Caesar and Herodotus in German translations.

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