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## Book Review: Wandering Greeks: The Ancient Greek Diaspora from the Age of Homer to the Death of Alexander the Great by Robert Garland

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**Garland, Robert. *Wandering Greeks: The Ancient Greek Diaspora from the Age of Homer to the Death of Alexander the Great*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. xxi + 319 pages. Hardcover, \$35.00.**

Robert Garland, a Professor of the Classics at Colgate University, investigates the Greek diaspora from roughly the beginning of the eighth century BC through the end of Alexander the Great's reign in 323 BC. Garland seeks to answer key questions concerning why the Greeks moved about the Mediterranean as they did. He explores the mental and physical challenges they faced, and the overall impact wandering had on their sense of identity. Garland maintains that Greek movements, either forced or voluntary, continued after the colonization surge of the early Archaic period and “were central to the survival, viability, and (it necessarily follows) phenomenal success of their societies” (p. 197). He believes that their need to be mobile bred a spirit of adaptability in the Greeks and encouraged “pan-hellenic institutions.” Wandering – whether to increase trade, land holdings or power, or to escape famine, political oppression or conquest – was central to what it meant to be Greek.

The author begins by discussing the limitations that the scarcity of sources placed upon his study as well as the parallels and differences in ancient and modern responses to migration. For instance, Garland discovers that foreigners were not trusted, were not afforded freedom of speech, and were viewed as a threat to the stability of civilized society. Also, exiles were viewed as a threat to their former city because they yearned for bloody civil war and the overthrow of the governing faction that had expelled them. Garland also points out that the best minds in Greek antiquity showed virtually no concern for the welfare of the wanderer, man or woman, and a woman alone on the road would have had no chance of survival. The author further observes that most states in Greece had what can be referred to as a “large exportable proletariat” and that there were many causes of movement, war and political strife (“*stasis*”), being the most common. He finds that mass deportations due to stasis often “functioned as a valuable safety valve in that it relieved political pressure” and avoided slaughter which might lead to the weakening of the state and invite foreign invasion (p. 80).

Methods popular in the interdisciplinary field of Migration Studies are employed here by examining the experiences of various types of migrants and the impact they had on their hosts. Garland includes individual chapters on the experiences of settlers, deportees, evacuees, asylum-seekers, fugitives, economic migrants, and itinerants, as well as ones on repatriation and the phenomenon that he labels the “Portable Polis” (p. 57). Chapter Four, “The Portable Polis,” for instance, describes the process by which a polis or city, in the face of an overwhelming threat perhaps due to a natural disaster or hostile neighbors, might take the radical step of uprooting the entire population and moving elsewhere. Garland recounts the experiences of various peoples who moved to avoid being conquered such as the Phocaeans, who Herodotus clearly celebrated for preserving their freedom or “Greekness” which was more of a “state of mind” than an attachment to certain buildings or a locale (p. 64). The study further details the subtle and sometimes revolutionary changes that made wandering different in the Archaic, Classical, and the post-Peloponnesian War periods.

What really stands out is how badly, in most cases, wanderers of all kinds fared in Greek Antiquity. Garland finds that most wanderers were treated as second or third-class citizens at best. Even in imperial/cosmopolitan Athens, a place believed to be more welcoming to outsiders than most, foreigners (or "*metics*") were subject to many disadvantages. Metics, the overwhelming majority of whom were Greek, even those valued for their skill in the crafts, trades or professions, were nevertheless registered, controlled, charged a monthly head tax, expected to serve support roles in the military, and were required to be associated with an Athenian patron. Migrants, wherever they came from and in spite of what value they may have afforded their hosts, were nonetheless susceptible to the phenomenon Garland describes as "compassion fatigue" (p. 83). Marriage between foreigners and Athenians was officially discouraged and the killing of a metic was "treated as the equivalent of an unintentional homicide, irrespective of the circumstances" (p. 158). Garland concludes that foreigners, Greek and non-Greek, were accepted "so long as they kept a low profile and demonstrated loyalty toward their adoptive country" (p. 163).

Garland's engaging writing style is spiced with random sarcasm. For instance, when discussing the Athenian evacuation of Attica in the face of Xerxes' invasion, he wonders what became of their slaves. In the place of evidence Garland humorously posits: "Could an Athenian live without a slave?" (p. 103). His research combines a study of recent scholarship in the interdisciplinary field of Migration Studies which includes the disciplines of anthropology, cultural studies, demography, economics, geography, history, psychology, and sociology, with a close look at how men such as Homer, Herodotus, Vergil, Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Xenophon, Isocrates, Plutarch, and the Athenian poets/dramatists, viewed wanderers. Though Garland does a good job of mining the available material, the author at times must resort to educated guesses when the inevitable paucity of primary sources arises. The work concludes with a list of questions raised but unanswered, suggestions for further reading, and several impressive appendices and indexes including a chronology and a glossary. This book is written for the educated general public but includes plenty for the specialist; it puts wandering and the Greek identity into context and provides a good overall picture of how migrants were treated during the pre-Hellenistic Greek diaspora.

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