

# A COMPANION TO ANCIENT HISTORY

*Edited by*

Andrew Erskine

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PART VII

**Politics and Power**

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## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

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# Structures

*Hans Beck*

### I Introduction

The term *structure* is used in many academic and non-academic contexts, yet it is rarely conceptualized. Social scientists collect and analyze structural data; a starship's hull has a structural integrity, as have atoms, high-rise buildings and rituals; epics such as the *Odyssey* or *The Lord of the Rings* follow a narrative superstructure; many ethnic groups are exposed to structural violence; linguistic approaches towards language include attempts to explore its logical structure, while structuralism in anthropology, as pioneered by Claude Lévi-Strauss, investigates the modes by which meaning is produced within a culture. The common implication underlying these examples is that something – material elements, a political organization, an academic discipline – consists of multiple parts that relate to each other, their structure being both the multiplicity of parts and their mutual relation. This meaning is already inherent in the Latin word *structura*, from which the modern term derives.

Historians have a difficult relation with structure. Ever since Herodotus of Halicarnassus presented his *historias apodeixis* (“Display of Inquiry,” though “Histories” is the more common translation), historians have sought to uncover the past. History, as a discipline, investigates systematically collected sources rather than deterministic structural forces. The study of the latter was extremely popular in the 1960s and 1970s, when the followers of structuralism claimed to offer a “scientific” approach to history through the meticulous calculation of, for instance, unemployment rates, GNPs and poverty lines. The refinement of sociologically inspired methodologies and anthropological concepts added to the discovery of structural patterns which are specific to human society. This approach was tremendously fruitful and continues to be influential, but it also faces criticism. The main objection is that structuralism, while rightly emphasizing the *longue durée* of historical processes (Braudel 1972), overstretches the concept of synchronicity. It oftentimes leaves too little space for diachronic change and development through time (cf. Renfrew/Cherry 1986: 18).



Although more recent trends in history writing emphasize various and at times competing concepts, it is fair to assert that the notion of culture, and the way it is transmitted and transformed, is at the core of today's research. Current approaches, which are greatly inspired by the cultural studies turn, include a renewed interest in the processes and practices of generating, perpetuating and communicating power (political, religious, sexual, etc.). At the same time, human agency – that is, the capacity of individuals to shape the process of history – has regained its deserved scholarly attention.

But processes such as the communication of power require a viable structure. Human action is embedded in a set of norms, patterns and sentiments that give meaning to that action and “structure” it. This set embraces both the horizontal distribution of structures as well as vertical patterns of hierarchy. Niklas Luhmann's oeuvre on system theory (cf. Luhmann 1995) is built on the assumption that those features are shared by bureaucracies, chains of command, or family bonds alike. Hence, when social scientists and scholars in the humanities speak of political or social structures, they refer to entities, institutions, and/or groups as they exist in definite relation to each other, and to their horizontal and vertical interaction within their respective systems. The dense network of this interaction constitutes a landscape that prefigures human action and contextualizes its behavior. Despite the historian's concern with process and change, history is therefore inexorably driven by structure.

Yet structures are never static. They have their own history. Take the unfolding of political institutions or, in the economic domain, the interaction between trade and cultural transmission. Even though this interaction is shaped by patterns of continuity, it is susceptible to human action and oftentimes moments of contingency that punctuate episodes of structural change. In the Aegean, always a highway for the exchange of ideas and goods, the structures of trade and cultural communication changed so dramatically towards the end of the Bronze Age that it is virtually impossible to forge a structural account that covers the time span of any two generations. Similarly, a static approach to the Roman republic has become increasingly difficult. Current research on the interaction between the senatorial elite and the *populus Romanus* stresses the exposure of this relation to constant change and adaptation. While the formal arrangement of politics, that is the organization of magistracies and assemblies, in principle remained the same throughout the republic, modern scholarship detects a great fluidity and in some periods even a dramatically accelerated change in the actual mechanics of republican government. It has been argued that when the republic fell, this was due to a perpetuated crisis, in fact a “crisis without alternative” (C. Meier 1982), which implies a structural deficit of Roman politics that would not allow for adaptability – and hence had to be replaced in an act of revolution (see section 3 below). This view has been challenged by Erich Gruen, who forcefully denied the necessity of such a development: “Civil war caused the fall of the republic – not vice versa” (Gruen 1974: 504). What caused the fall of the Roman republic, then, a structural deficit of politics, a series of more or less contingent wars, or the human agency of men like Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar? It is the historian's task to disclose the underlying structural principles of human action. At the same time, the

historian must present an account that is open enough to reflect the dynamics of continuity and change. History writing juggles process, structure, and event.

## 2 Political Structures and Institutional Power

The problem is not new, nor is the attempt to compose a narrative that balances the outlined principles. Some time in the third quarter of the fourth century BC, one of Aristotle's pupils wrote an account on the "Constitution of the Athenians" (*Athenion politeia*). Classical Athens was the flagship of democracy in a world in which hundreds of city-states (*poleis*, sing. *polis*) lived under different degrees of popular participation. Although by then the glory days of democracy had already been shattered, the work was a forceful homage to Athenian achievements. Since the first paragraphs of the papyrus have not survived, it is uncertain whether it included an opinionated introduction such as the one found in Cicero's *De officiis* ("On Duties"), which in some ways seems to have been inspired by Aristotle's approach. Notwithstanding this gap, the main body of the text may very well provide a telling clue as to what the author wanted to portray. It presents a history of Athenian political institutions showing how the "classical" form of democracy had been brought about and how it determined the "present form of the constitution" ([Arist.], *Ath. Pol.* 42).

The idea of composing a study of Athenian institutions was ground breaking. It seems to have triggered the collection of information on other Greek constitutions. The corpus of Aristotle's works included at least 158 such treatises on the governments of tribes and city-states, only a few lines of which have been preserved through dispersed excerpts found in medieval and Renaissance literature. A generation before Aristotle, Xenophon, an exiled Athenian who had close relations with Sparta, published an account entitled *Lakedaimonion politeia* ("Constitution of the Lakedaimonians," i.e. Spartans) that did survive in full. Xenophon's approach to Sparta's "constitution" can be considered more comprehensive, in the sense that it deals with cultural traditions, social practices and religious beliefs. Despite the differences in style and scope, both works present a remarkable attempt to conceptualize, and systematize, the mechanics of government through the study of political structures. Their underlying assumption is manifold: that the *polis* community recognizes the authority of institutionalized power, that citizens obey laws and institutions that exercise that power, and that citizens participate in the vexed interplay of institutional checks and balances so that they are allowed an equal share in the institutions of state power.

Greek city-states possessed similar political structures. The common distinction between democracies and oligarchies related mainly to differences in the distribution of power, eligibility for office, or the concept of citizenship. *Polis* institutions included a body of annually elected magistrates (*archai*), a primary assembly (*ekklesia*), mostly for legislature, and some sort of council (*boule*) that served as a more permanent administration than the assembly. While popular law courts often supplemented the system, in smaller city-states the assembly also served as juristic body, resulting in an even more rudimentary arrangement. In many ways, this matrix – magistrates,

assembly, council – resembles the organization of other Mediterranean city-state cultures.

In Athens, institutions had been significantly refined toward the end of the sixth century BC. Under the archonship of Kleisthenes, the citizen body was reorganized in such a way that citizens were to be members of one of over 100 local units called *demes*. These *demes* were grouped to form 30 new *trittyes* (thirdings) from three regions of Attica, which were distributed among ten *phylai* (tribes). The *phylai* were arranged so that each of them included *trittyes* from three different zones – coast, city, and inland. In the future, the *phylai* served as constituencies for the election of magistrates, the selection of members of the city's council and law courts, and also as brigading units for the army. At the same time, they had their own corporate life, with their own magistrates, sanctuaries, and hero cults. The Kleisthenic system provided a grand mixture of political, social, and spatial structures that integrated the citizen body in multiple ways. Even though this appears to have been only one goal of the many envisioned by Kleisthenes, the system gave Athenians an effective internal articulation. Athens' political stability throughout long periods of the fifth and fourth centuries BC was also due to this structural arrangement.

In other city-states similar systems seem to have been in place. Yet, on a more general level, it is striking to see how rudimentary the institutional apparatus for governing domestic affairs and conducting foreign policy was. The cohesion of citizenries in the classical and the Hellenistic *polis* can never be fully understood through the study of its political structures. Institutions such as a council or primary assembly were based on, and practically geared toward, the belief that only the citizen body as a whole was the representative of the state. This thought was already prominent in the seventh century BC, as is well attested by an inscription from the city of Dreros on Crete that uses the term *polis* both for the institutionalized assembly and in the more general sense of city (Fornara no. 11). The city and the legislative body of Dreros were thus perceived as one. It was this strong sense – or ideology – of a common civic identity rather than the structural arrangement of politics that was at the heart of the Greek city-state.

The habit of falling into the “constitutional-law trap” (Finley 1983: 56) is probably more common among Roman historians, thanks to the great corpus of Roman juristic tradition from the Twelve Tables to Gaius's *Institutiones* and Justinian's Code, and thanks even more to Theodor Mommsen's towering *Römisches Staatsrecht* (three volumes, 1871–88). Mommsen's approach was that of a full-fledged systematization of Roman constitutional law. The keystone of his reconstruction was the term *imperium*, a magistrate's power, that was regarded as a common point of reference for the hierarchy of public offices and for the administration of empire. Yet Mommsen was certainly aware that Rome's ruling elite had always been reluctant to govern subject territories by means of carefully planned administrative action, let alone integrate those subjects into a formalized administrative superstructure. While overseas conquest and territorial expansion accelerated, the senate refused to respond to that development.

Only a few years before the Hannibalic war (218–201 BC) the senate started to dispatch two newly established praetors to Sicily and Sardinia on an annual basis. Both

islands became the first two Roman provinces, yet neither had a uniform administration. A province was often a mosaic of territories with varying statuses and the administration of justice, and local constitutions differed considerably from one province to another (in light of this it is not surprising that the early meaning of the word *provincia* was not “province,” but rather “area of magisterial command”). The reason for the senate’s indifference vis-à-vis a tighter structure was that any such measure might have had severe implications for the domestic equilibrium. In light of persistent aristocratic competition for public offices, the creation of new offices *cum imperio* (with the power of *imperium*) might have easily distorted that competition. Consequently, towards the end of the republic, Rome ruled the Mediterranean world with a political infrastructure that was hardly larger than that of a Greek city-state’s.

It is not exactly true that “the Roman empire had no government” (Millar 1981a: 52), but it is nearly so. The essential feature of Rome’s administration of the provinces under the emperors was that, while the republican structures remained largely intact, a diversified pattern of new posts and institutions answering to the extended activities of the state and the interests of the emperor had grown around them. Senatorial magistrates, called proconsuls, were appointed by lot to some of the provinces, serving there for their year of office. In other provinces, mainly the ones in which the legions were stationed, the emperor appointed governors who were called *legati Augusti* and served until they were recalled by the emperor. The distinction between imperial and senatorial provinces has often been perceived as a structural characteristic of the empire’s administration, with the emperor ruling one half of the provinces and the senate the other. However, it seems now that, from the beginning, proconsuls and *legati* alike received their instructions from the emperor. The dichotomous structure of imperial and senatorial provinces is more apparent than real.

In Edward Gibbon’s famous account on *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (three volumes, 1776–88), it is argued that Rome succumbed to barbarian invasions because of a dramatic disintegration of social codes and civic virtues among its citizens. This view remains influential in more modern explanations, although a re-examination of anthropological records and of material culture invites a more complex interpretation. It is striking to note how little the political structure-paradigm has to offer in this regard. To be sure, towards the later period of the Roman empire notable attempts were made to respond to the demands of the day. For instance, the emperor Diocletian decentralized the structures of government in AD 293 by reducing the city of Rome’s role as operational capital, replacing it with four capitals that formed the so-called tetrarchy, a term meaning a leadership of four. Yet even efforts such as this could not provide an institutional framework that was capable of channeling the wholesale transformation of the social stratum in and around the empire.

### 3 The Social Stratum: Micro- and Macro-Structures

Classical antiquity is not an age notorious for social revolutions (despite de Ste. Croix 1981). The Greek world was probably more susceptible to social unrest and turmoil

than Rome. Internal strife (*stasis*) was endemic in many *poleis*, and rivalries between competing factions would often result in violent civil wars. But, rather than being initiated by social agendas, *stasis* only fuelled them. Domestic warfare was determined by a deadly ethos of revenge that required the disadvantaged faction to retaliate more forcefully, resulting in a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence. The competing factions hardly ever envisioned a thorough change of the social arrangement.

At Rome, the social equilibrium was more stable. Once the so-called struggle of the orders between patricians and plebeians had been settled in the early decades of the third century BC, the social stratification that distinguished the ruling aristocracy from the common people was frozen. It remained largely intact until it was annihilated in a series of civil wars in the later decades of the first century BC. The final death blow came during what Ronald Syme famously called the “The Roman Revolution.” In this masterly analysis (published in 1939), Syme was able to trace the transformation of the aristocratic elite of the republic into a new ruling class that was exclusively focused on, and perpetuated by, the imperial power of the *princeps* (the first citizen). This radical social restructuring of the Roman aristocracy was carefully orchestrated by Augustus to secure his monarchical position. Hence, in this revolution – if one wants to adopt Syme’s terminology – Augustus was the main revolutionary.

The other end of the social order is marked by the family, the nucleus of any society. Both the concept’s underlying connotations and familial structures have changed significantly during their long history. Family in antiquity hardly resembles modern, let alone Western understandings. The Greeks did not even have a word for family. The closest is *oikos* (“house” or “household”), which embraces a wider range of political, social and economic meanings. While parents and children formed the biological core of the *oikos*, Greek households also included grandparents; a number of other extended family members, especially unmarried female relatives; as well as non-kin members, such as freedmen and slaves. Women never relinquished membership of their native household, which means that whereas men lived only in one *oikos*, women usually lived in two (S. Pomeroy 1975: 62). By comparison, the Roman *familia* was actually more exclusive and also more structured than the Greek *oikos*. The Roman family had strict hierarchies: the male was the head of the household (the *paterfamilias*), dominating over his wife and children, who were under his legal power (even though this power was less straightforward than the Roman tradition would have us believe). The strongest familial ties were blood relations between *cognati*, normally parents and their children. Children from another wife or a father’s siblings were *agnati*, a secondary relationship that was detailed already in the Twelve Tables (M. Crawford 1996: II: 634–51). In short, the Roman family was tightly structured and defined through laws and customs that privileged blood relations over remoter relations such as marriage or adoption.

The familial structures into which a person was born in Greece and Rome differed remarkably. But when one looks at the wider stratum of social differentiation, those differences seem to diminish in importance. Throughout the Greco-Roman world, societies were based on a dichotomy between the privileged few and the not-so-

privileged many. In Rome, whereas the ruling class of the senatorial aristocracy – and, in particular, its leading inner circle, the so-called nobility – was the political, social, and, for the most part, economic *classe dirigeante*, the vast majority of citizens were considered ordinary people, the *populus*. This dichotomy occurred in Greece as well, even though in less obvious terms. As indicated above, the assembly of people was considered to be the *polis*'s ultimate decision-making body, an arrangement that triggered a strong sense of popular power. But this shared impression of power did not rule out the existence of other mechanisms of social polarization and exclusion. The most common feature of social polarization was the division of citizens into property classes. In Athens, the citizenry consisted of four classes with only the (rich) members of the higher classes eligible for certain magistracies. The Roman voting assemblies operated along the lines of a similar, yet once again more tightly structured scheme. The most prominent assembly, the *comitia centuriata*, comprised 193 voting units. These were divided among five property classes in such a way that the higher census classes contained the highest number of centuries, while the proletarians (*proletarii*), who fell below the minimum property qualification for membership of the fifth class, were enrolled in a single century and were effectively disfranchised (Taylor 1966).

Other features of social polarization included the distinction between males and females, exemplified, for example, in the exclusion of women from politics; the differentiation between citizens and aliens, often accompanied by, and expressed through, a perception of self- and otherness; the divide between free people and slaves; and, ultimately, the distinction between mortals and gods, each occupying separate, but related realms. The social position of a person was hence defined by various dichotomies. It was shaped by “polarized oppositions” (Cartledge 2002a: 13) that signaled someone's status in negative terms, that is, it determined a person's social standing by the dual structure of what someone was understood to be only in opposition to what he or she was not. This pattern of bipolarity and mutual exclusion is among the most salient legacies of antiquity. One might add that it is also among the most burdensome.

It is worth looking more closely at the structuring forces behind the social stratification of Rome. As mentioned above, Rome's social order was characterized by a *longue durée* of political and social institutions. This order was not enforced by ruling bodies or laws, but rather by tradition. The *mos maiorum* (ways of the ancestors) provided the Romans with a tight network of collective codes of political, social and cultural practices. These codes were based on the assumption that the achievements of the Roman people were mostly due to time-honored principles and traditions. In the early second century BC, the poet Quintus Ennius coined a formula which famously encapsulates this idea: “On ancient customs stands the Roman state as well as on men” (*Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque*) (*Annales* 5.156 Skutsch). Later traditions offered countless examples of the glory, honor, and piety of such men who had made Rome great, from the founding fathers of the republic to Appius Claudius Caecus, Fabius Maximus, the elder Cato and many more. Livy's monumental Roman history *ab urbe condita* (Books from the Foundation of the City) projects a “written Rome” (M. Jaeger 1997), a narrative that is full of references to the



exemplary deeds that constituted the ways of these men. Tradition, and the past in general, thus became obligatory points of reference that gave both meaning and stability to the present. They not only encouraged the current generation to surpass its ancestors in their achievements for the *res publica*, but also demanded obedience to traditional political procedures and social norms.

One of the landmarks of ancestral traditions was the overall consensus on social hierarchies. The senatorial elite was regarded as a leading status group, which, in turn, respected, often ostentatiously, the integrity of the common people. This mutual consensus included the conduct of politics itself. While the assemblies of the Roman people acted as decision-making bodies, they would never reach a decision without prior consultation of the senate. This principle was never put into question before the Gracchi. Mutual consensus provided an underlying, deeply rooted structure to Roman political behavior. When Tiberius Gracchus and his brother Gaius did challenge this procedure in the 130s and 120s BC, it marked the beginning of a century of civil wars. Despite the lively discourse on tradition and its structuring forces that came to light during this conflict, the clock of tradition was never set back.

#### 4 Structuring Space – Spatial Structures

The Greek term *polis* has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, *polis* is used to designate the city-state as political entity, with a strong emphasis on the political organization of the city body. On the other hand, *polis* simply means city, a settlement with a town center and a certain degree of urban infrastructure (Hansen/Nielsen 2004). This double meaning is already omnipresent in Homer's poetry: Odysseus not only visits many cities, but living in a city is portrayed as characteristic of an advanced society. "Who are you among men, from whence? Where is your *polis*, your parents?" (*Odyssey* I.170) was a standard address to a stranger. In this formulaic salutation, the city is juxtaposed to a person's descent and cultural identity.

What exactly constitutes a city in an ancient Mediterranean context, and how were cities structured? Archaeological indications of city development in Greece such as fortification walls, temples and public works appear in several sites dating as early as the eighth century BC. Survey archaeology suggests that smaller settlement units in the countryside were abandoned at this time, their populations migrating to nearby urban centers. Recent scholarship has extrapolated the emergence of different, yet closely interrelated structural paradigms that accompanied these processes. The first is the conceptual development of space and spatiality as underlying presumptions of urbanization. The rise of the *polis* was determined by various separations of space, especially of urban centers and sub- or extra-urban countrysides (de Polignac 1995); of spaces for the living and the dead; and also of private spheres and public spaces. In the course of this new spatial conceptualization, the Greek city became a realm defined by various internal bipolarities, while its boundaries separated its "civilized" space from the outside world. The transformation of Athens from an ancient citadel to a vibrant city with a stratified urban topography might in many ways have been exceptional. But the structural integration of the countryside and the city center

under Kleisthenes (see section 2 above) also highlights the outlined principle of perceiving spaces that were separate, yet complementary parts of a *polis*.

Spatial stratification is also the key to the second paradigm. When the Greeks started to found new cities throughout the Mediterranean in the course of the eighth and seventh centuries BC, this process was not distinct from the process of urbanization. On the contrary, it was a part of it. Town planning from scratch in colonies such as Selinous in western Sicily (c.650 BC) or Metapontion required architectural expertise, and a successful outcome reassured town planners that their methods were on the whole applicable. The urban structure of Selinous was characterized by the centrality of reserved areas of profane and religious public spaces with a central axis between them. A so-called Hippodamic grid (named after Hippodamos of Miletos, antiquity's most famous town planner) was applied, which means that the city was covered by orthogonal cross-roads: streets ran from east to west, crossing the main north-south road at a right angle. In other words, Selinous's urban structure was thus shaped by an elaborate spatial stratification embedded in a grid of roads and *insulae*, a pattern that has been copied in many North American cities.

The third aspect that added to the momentum marking the rise of the Greek city was monumentalization. Once the dichotomy of urban center and hinterland had been conceptualized, and once the space within the city's boundaries reflected the internal separation of private and public space, it was only a small step toward the refinement of infrastructures. Religious buildings already stood out among the structures of the earliest *poleis*. Temples soon spread, multiplied and increased greatly in size and sophistication. The profane followed. The market place (*agora*) became the focus of the city's economic and political life. Firmly located in the center of the *polis*'s spatial framework, the *agora* symbolized the heart of the citizen community. Monuments such as honorary statues or *stelai* (stone slabs) with public inscriptions (treaties, laws, decrees, and other important writings stipulated by the people's assembly) were set up in the *agora*, which placed them, quite literally, before the eyes of the citizenry. In addition, office buildings for annually elected magistrates and meeting places for the city council were located on, or around, the *agora* to display the institutions of governmental action to the community. Just as the city, as such, expressed the civilized order of the citizenry, its central market place symbolized the internal order of this community. Hence, the *agora* not only fulfilled the primary function of providing a public space for the conduct of business and political affairs, but it also assumed the function of a 'symbolic structuring of the community' (Hölkeskamp 2004: 30).

Antiquity's most famous market place, the *forum Romanum*, in many ways fits into this picture. The city of Rome resembles the principle of a diversely structured urban space, but the complexity of the spatial arrangement in the fateful triangle between Capitol, Forum and Palatine beats that of any other Mediterranean city. The Capitol – according to a Roman tradition the *caput mundi*, or the center of the world – was regarded as the religious center of the *res publica*, while the Palatine became a distinct space occupied by the republican elite, and then, as the long process of monumentalization went on, a location reserved for the imperial household.

Between Capitol and Palatine, the Forum became the center of Rome's commercial, communal and ceremonial life. It was surrounded by monumental buildings,



such as basilicas, temples and, in the earlier period, shops that soon gave way to the growing demand for public space. Assemblies of the common people were held in the adjacent Comitium, which was neighbored by the senate-house, the Curia. The close vicinity of Comitium and Curia symbolized the unity of the people and the ruling aristocracy, a unity that the Romans clothed in the famous formula *SPQR* (*senatus populusque Romanus*). But the spatial organization of the Forum also generated social meaning in more subtle ways. Many *lieux de mémoire* (“realms of memory,” as coined by the French historian Pierre Nora) were situated in its square. The *lacus Curtius* and the *figus Ruminalis*, a sacred fig tree on the spot where tradition said the trough containing Romulus and Remus landed on the banks of the Tiber, were but two. The heart of the republic was hence characterized by a highly charged, dense urban network that combined administrative, religious, public, and commemorative functions. Enriched with monuments and memorials, this setting provided a public space that not only reflected the order of society, but also gave meaning to this order and its inherent structure (for Rome, see further Bruun, *ROME*).

Places of memory generate a collective matrix of memorialization. They serve as points of reference to oral and written traditions. In turn, they structure, and verify, those traditions by providing additional evidence that “proves” their case. Some time in the second half of the second century AD, a Greek by the name of Pausanias composed a *Description of Greece* in ten books that became the world’s first Baedeker. Pausanias’s *Periegesis* was a skillful account of the geography of Roman Greece that covered the natural environment, archaeological remains, and the topography of mythical traditions as well as its *lieux de mémoire*. The text was organized along the lines of a long journey, its narrative loaded with living remainders of an enchanted past. It took the reader on a vicarious journey in Pausanias’s own footsteps, recapitulating his impressions and insights. Doing so, the *Periegesis* projected an imaginary picture of Greece with a landscape that was translated from geography into text. From Hekataios to Strabo, forerunners to Pausanias had produced accounts that were written at the crossroads of culture, geography, and history. Yet, only in the *Periegesis* does a truly transdisciplinary approach emerge. Pausanias was the only one who managed to describe the geographic and topographic particularities of Greece, while evoking a picture that embodied distinct sets of historic and cultural achievements that were of immediate value to his reader. His writing thus reflects the ongoing process of “wrestling with a transcription” (Elsner 2001: 20) that faces every historian. It attests to the historian’s eternal quest for a formula that translates human action into narrative, and it discloses how much our reading of history depends on the structure of that narrative.

## FURTHER READING

The works of the French pioneers Claude Lévi-Strauss and Fernand Braudel have been translated into English, which makes them accessible to the Anglophone reader. This is also true for Pierre Nora’s *Les lieux de mémoire* (1984–92), which has inspired a fascinating volume on

realms of memory in antiquity: Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2006. Luhmann 1995 is but one monograph of a truly exhausting oeuvre. His notorious self-references have provoked a pile of Luhmann companions to further the understanding of his work. The political structures of Greece and Rome are covered in most introductions to the ancient world. The debate on the fall of the republic has been reopened in the course of the current debate on Roman political culture (cf. Morstein-Marx, *POLITICAL HISTORY*). Hansen/Nielsen 2004 have produced an inventory of Greek city-states that comprises not fewer than 1,035 entries. The approach of de Polignac 1995 puts less emphasis on completeness, but it has greatly improved existing perceptions of the origins of the early Greek city. This can also be said of the inspiring essay of Cartledge 2002a, which projects a dazzling picture of ancient Greek world views free from classical nostalgia. De Ste. Croix 1981 is an unparalleled attempt to establish the validity of a Marxist analysis of the ancient world. His most vocal opponent is Finley, a famous advocate of Weberian societal analysis (1983 is again but one example). Studies in gender issues and sexual asymmetries profit immensely from McClure 2002, who assembles a team of eminent scholars to comment on select sources. Greco-Roman family structures are covered in the standard work of reference, Pomeroy 1975, that deals mainly with the social roles of women in classical antiquity, and see Harlow and Parkin, *THE FAMILY*. Current trends and approaches towards space and spatiality are summarized in the extremely thoughtful article by Hölkeskamp 2004. The interplay of texts and imaginary pictures of places, cities, or landscapes has been disclosed by M. Jaeger 1997 and Elsner 2001. The most extensive treatment of historical narratives and their characteristic structures is that of H. White 1987. Morley 1999 (chap. 3) is a bit more easy-going on this.