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An Interview with Roberto Sammartano on the Occasion of the Monograph, *Alle radici della syngeneia. Parentele etniche nel mondo greco prima della guerra del Peloponneso* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2020)

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Book Reference

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Sammartano, R. 2020. *Alle radici della syngeneia. Parentele etniche nel mondo greco prima della guerra del Peloponneso*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

A Short Profile of the Author

Roberto Sammartano is Associate Professor of Ancient Greek History at the University of Palermo. In 2021, he obtained the qualification for academic teaching as a Full Professor. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Kokalos. Rivista di Storia antica dell'Università degli Studi di Palermo* (ISSN: 0392-0887; 2035-276X), and Chairman of the Istituto Siciliano per la Storia Antica 'Eugenio Manni'. His research interests cover a broad spectrum of topics, such as the Ancient History



of Sicily and the Western Mediterranean, Greek historiography, including the Greek historians of the West, ethnic identities and kinship between cities and people in the ancient world. He has published extensively on these themes in articles that appeared in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings, as well as in books: *Origines gentium Siciliae. Ellanico, Antioco, Tucidide* (Kokalos, Suppl. n. 14, Roma, 1998) and *Alle radici della syngeneia. Parentele etniche nel mondo greco prima della guerra del Peloponneso* (Studi di Storia greca e romana 19, Alessandria 2020).

The Interview

What motivated you to explore the topic of ethnic kinship in the Ancient Greek world?

RS | I was working on the topic of kinship between people and cities in the Greek world and about the relative terminology when I realised that there was no in-depth study on the use of ethnic descriptors and emotions before the Peloponnesian War.

How do you see your work contributing to the existing scholarship on Greek history and identity?

RS | I think that my study discusses a relevant topic that has never been dealt with so far: the development of ethnic identities and the rise of ethnic sentiments across localities in Old Greece from the end of the sixth century to the mid-fifth century.

Who do you believe will find your book most valuable or relevant, and what impact do you hope it will have in the field?

RS | I believe that my book can be relevant to a range of scholars, from historians of Ancient Greece to philologists and, broadly speaking, all those interested in Classical studies or Classical Antiquity.

What were the pivotal moments in your book's research and writing process?

RS | I completed this book during the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This long period of isolation allowed me to work hard, in a kind of total immersion, on the massive bibliography on this topic I had previously collected.

Were there any challenges or discoveries you encountered during research or assumptions you had to revise?

RS | The main challenge was to study the topic of ethnic sentiments across the Greeks, as evident in the descriptions of interstate relations depicted in the *Histories* of Herodotos. This was something effectively challenging as it had never received due attention from scholars.

With hindsight, what would you want to go back and change?

RS | At the moment, I would not change anything.

What do you wish you could have done and did not do?

RS | I wish I had dealt with the subject of ethnic sentiments in the Greek colonies of Western Mediterranean areas.

What was the most important breakthrough?

RS | I guess... that I was able to highlight the importance of ethnic sentiments of different *poleis* and people and their interplay during the Greco-Persian Wars.

What is the coolest place you sat and worked on your book?

RS | Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I worked at home – you could say in some sort of isolation. Then, the most exciting place of work was from the time before. At first, I collected all the bibliographic material I needed in the Library of the German Archaeological Institute of Rome and the Library of the Ecole Française at Rome.

On a more personal note, what would you do in life if you were not a Classicist?

RS | I do not know exactly. Maybe something completely different. Possibly, I would have studied natural sciences.