

PREFACE

On 23 February 2016 Christian Habicht, Emeritus Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, celebrated his 90th birthday. For this occasion the editors of the journal *Hyperboreus* had the idea of dedicating a fascicle of the journal to their old friend, who contributed his studies to *Hyperboreus* from its very beginning, thus giving the new initiative of classicists at Saint Petersburg valuable help and encouragement. The present fascicle is not a real Festschrift, a collection which aims at describing the interests and evaluating the impact of the honorand in the widest possible range – yet what volume could possibly do justice to the achievements of one of the most outstanding ancient historians of our time? Instead, this volume was conceived as a joint gift to honor Christian Habicht presented by the scholars of Saint Petersburg associated with the *Bibliotheca Classica* together with some of his pupils, friends and colleagues, who were invited to share in this celebration. Some of the papers in the volume are related to the fields which are prominent in Christian Habicht's scholarly activities – Greek and Roman history and epigraphy – in the broadest sense, including the 'provincial' areas of Asia Minor, the Greek cities of the Black Sea shore and Judaea (the periphery of the Classical world is equally important for Christian Habicht's work as the central areas). It should come as no surprise that the epigraphy and history of Athens are well represented in the volume, which reminds us once again that Christian Habicht's monographs and articles on Hellenistic Athens have provided a solid foundation for any study in this field both now and in the future. The breadth and the painstaking attention to detail found in his studies of the literary and epigraphic sources for Hellenistic Athens has transformed our understanding of this period; future generations may modify aspects of Habicht's *vue d'ensemble*, but its main outlines are sure to remain a reliable and enlightening guide to the subject. The other contributions, devoted to subjects more remote from his usual areas of interest (such as Renaissance Greek and New Latin inscriptions), display the same careful scrutiny of inscriptions and literary sources that we have come to associate with the work of Christian Habicht.

The papers of the Festheft of course do not cover all the topics to which Christian Habicht has made important contributions. The latter include (far from a complete list) the cults of benefactors in Greek cities, now the starting point for the investigations of the Hellenistic and Roman ruler cults; the numerous editions of inscriptions and historical studies of the areas like Acarnania, Samos, Thessaly, Cos; the monograph-length study of Pausanias, an eloquent defense of the periegete's reputation as a historical source and as a writer, on the basis of epigraphy, archaeology and a careful reading of Pausanias himself, with the enjoyable appendix on the personal reasons for Wilamowitz' antipathy toward Pausanias – a masterpiece of the history of scholarship; and a small but powerful book about Cicero, which contains a perceptive analysis of his political talents. Despite the limitations of this volume, both in its size and in its range of topics, the editors hope that that the honorand will find the essays both a joy to read and valuable contributions to scholarship, which meet the high standards he has set in his own work: tireless precision, rigorous arguments, and careful marshalling of support for all his views in the ancient sources critically examined.

Christian Habicht's impact on epigraphic and historical studies through his books and articles has been enormous. But those who were fortunate enough to observe him working at the IAS Princeton also witnessed the splendid example he set for all scholars: the strict adherence to *Pünktlichkeit* in the best sense he followed every day by arriving at the Benjamin Merritt library before 9 AM (Freia Habicht drove him to the Institute in the morning and back home at five PM); his affable and generous but penetrating scrutiny of scholarly talks, especially when it came to the details of an inscription or other text; and last but not least, the *gemütlich* hospitality Freia and Christian Habicht always displayed to guests at their dinners (the guest always received something to take home, according to a German custom). If *humanitas* can play a role in Classical scholarship, Christian Habicht has showed all scholars how the two can be harmoniously combined.

It was not difficult to find scholars eager to contribute to this volume honoring Christian Habicht. Those whom the editors invited to submit essays to this volume responded both joyfully and enthusiastically. The editors wish to express their gratitude to all the authors.

Editors