

## **Guidelines for Book Reviewers**

*Journal of Modern Greek Studies*

### **Overview**

Book reviews add great value to a scholarly journal because the review not only conveys the book's argument, but also situates that argument within past and current scholarship. In praising a book's merits, a reviewer implicitly sanctions and augments the book's objectives, its sources, and its research methods. Through the process of evaluating and contextualizing a book in a well-considered review, scholars do more than advance the scholarly conversation about the subject and methodology of the work under review; they help shape the contours of the field at large, reexamine the discipline's conventions, and ultimately exert influence on future research.

The guidelines below aim to demystify the process (reviews are structurally quite formulaic), and provide a list of key components. While journals have different approaches to writing book reviews, the *JMGS* editorial board feels that these guidelines best serve the interests of our readers. Please submit your review electronically as an email attachment by the agreed upon deadline. Direct all inquiries to the book review editors by email. We are grateful to all of our colleagues who take the time to review newly published works. Ευχαριστούμε!

### **Components**

Firstly, a strong review provides a concise summary of the book under review. That summary states what the book seeks to accomplish and how, leaving readers with a clear sense of the book's argument, evidence, and methodology. Some reviews note the book's general structure, and provide a more complete summary of the section of greatest interest to the journal's readership. Quotations from the book and from secondary sources should be used sparingly. One or two brief, well-chosen quotations can most effectively illustrate the author's style and complement the review.

All reviews offer an evaluative component, which assesses the extent to which the book accomplishes what it had set out to do. Praise for the book's merits may also accomplish some contextualizing work. Praise can compare the book favorably to similar works, state how the book advances a line of inquiry initiated in earlier publications, or identify a gap in the literature that has been filled.

Reviews must identify omissions or structural weaknesses that prevent the book from attaining its own stated or implicit goal. Similarly, reviews should note errors and inaccuracies in a respectful manner. Respectful criticism avoids putting authors on the defensive, and thus best achieves the larger purpose of the review, which is to add momentum to the scholarly conversation, spur rich and rigorous dialogue, and usher the scholarly community as a whole toward even more nuanced, accurate conclusions.

After articulating the book's goal and assessing the extent to which that goal was accomplished, reviews should proceed to evaluating the importance of that accomplishment to the field. Reviewers should note the relevant theoretical literatures in this domain and examine how the book under review applies theoretical tools in innovative ways, or advances the available theoretical apparatus itself. Contextualizing the book also means that a reviewer should consider how the book under review relates to current scholarship, shedding light on an underexplored area or reevaluating the field's typical emphasis.

### **Ethical considerations**

Authors of *JMGS* book reviews are bound by the same ethical guidelines as authors of scholarly articles. Those [ethical guidelines are available here under "responsibility of the author."](#) Book review authors must be especially scrupulous in considering potential conflicts of interest. Those who present potential conflicts of interest include dissertation advisors or advisees of the book author, former or current department colleagues, former or current co-authors, and those who contributed significantly to the manuscript, reviewed the book for a press or another journal, or have major scholarly, ideological, or personal disagreements with the author. It is impossible for the editors to anticipate all of these scenarios, so we rely on reviewers to disclose potential conflicts of interest upon receiving an invitation to review.

### **A rewarding process**

Book reviews play a significant role in the direction of Modern Greek Studies. A book review does not merely articulate the importance of an individual book's contribution, but reinscribes the trajectory and values of the field as a whole. The rewards of a book review go beyond the free issue of *JMGS*, the CV line, and the copy of a book that reviewers get to keep if they complete the review. We hope reviewers will find the process itself intellectually rewarding, and gain satisfaction from entering into dialogue with the distinguished members of the *JMGS* community—authors and readers alike.

### **Formatting the Review**

Please make your review conform as closely as possible to the format provided below. The review should not exceed 1200 words.

#### **Sample heading for titles in Greek:**

Elizabeth Arseniou. Ελισάβετ Αρσενίου, *Νοσταλγοί και πλαστουργοί. Εντυπα, κείμενα, και κινήματα στη μεταπολεμική Ελλάδα.* Athens: Paraferalia. 2003. Pp. 448. Paper €20.

[Author's (or editor's) name in English, period. Author's (or editor's) name in Greek, nominative case, comma, *title in Greek italicized and underlined using sentence capitalization*, period. City of publication in English, colon, publisher in English, period. Publication date, period. Page numbers as follows: Pp. 448 followed by period. Cloth *or* Paper *space* Price

followed by period. Note the monetary symbol of the euro as well as the indentation of all lines following the first line. Note: format indent using your processor's feature for indenting and not a line break and tab.

**Sample heading for titles in English:**

Susan Buck Sutton, editor, *Contingent Countryside: Settlement, Economy, and Land Use in the Southern Argolid since 1700*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2000. Pp. xii + 391. 38 illustrations, 6 maps. Cloth \$90.00.

[Author's (or editor's) name, comma. *Title italicized and underlined using title capitalizations*, period. Translator's name, etc., if applicable, period. City of publication, colon, publisher's name, period. Publication date, period. Page numbers as follows: Pp. xii + 391 followed by period. Illustrations, maps, figures, tables as follows: 38 illustrations, 6 maps, 2 tables followed by period. Cloth *or* Paper *space* Price followed by period. Note the indentation of all lines following the first line: **please use your processor's feature for indenting and not a line break and tab to make this indentation**. When calculating page numbers, count only those that relate to the book proper; do not include advertisements.]

Sample text:

Be sure to type your text, including the heading, double line spaced, with one-inch margins and a 12-point font. Indent paragraphs as shown. Do not use any notes please; incorporate any necessary documentation into the text, "like this page number" (11).

Keep as closely as possible the word count assigned to you. The editor will feel free to cut a review that is excessively long. *Also, please observe the deadline.*

YOUR NAME IN CAPITALS

*Your academic affiliation here, italicized*

**Other important instructions:**

- 1) All words and phrases rendered in Greek should **be translated in parentheses**.
- 2) If names other than the book's author are mentioned, the first and last names should be used in the first appearance and last name only afterwards.
- 3) Be sure to include page numbers (in parentheses) from the book from the very first draft of the writing. The rule is no quotes without a citation.
- 4) There are no scare quotes allowed in the JMGS style. They introduce a lack of clarity and fuzziness of thinking.
- 5) No footnotes are allowed for book reviews, but if you must, add references in JMGS style. If you make reference to other publications, make sure you include them in the list of CITATIONS. For a more detailed JMGS style sheet, see here:  
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