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SUBJECT REVIEWS

Greek Literature

It felt slightly spooky when I opened *The Winnowing Oar*[1] and found a lecture by Martin West on editing the *Odyssey* that concludes with a pre-emptive defence of his endorsement of Aristophanes' reading at *Od.* 13.158: six months earlier, in my brief review of West's edition (*G&R* 65 [2018], 272), I had – somewhat recklessly – described that reading as 'reckless'. It's an excellent lecture, and well worth reading. But the Aristophanic variant still fails to convince me. This difference of opinion pales into insignificance, however, next to the textual bombshell in Franco Montanari's chapter in the same volume, on the failed embassy in *Iliad* 9. Applying the familiar analytic argument-schema 'X would have mentioned Y, if Y had been in the text that X read', I am inexorably led to the conclusion that Montanari is working from a text of *Iliad* 9 in which the embassy concludes with Achilles' response to Phoenix (47). The long-standing riddle of the use of duals to describe a three-man delegation is therefore solved: Ajax was a later addition to the text. The alternative explanation, that X has chosen not to mention the one member of the delegation who (even after Achilles has pointedly declared the discussion at an end) succeeds in getting Achilles to make a positive (though deferred) commitment to coming to the rescue of his comrades (649–55), is surely too far-fetched to be credible. Montanari is a very fine scholar: but the embassy that he describes is not the one that I find in my text. Eleven other fine scholars have contributed to this *Festschrift* for Antonios Rengakos: I will briefly mention three chapters that particularly caught my attention. Margalit Finkelberg argues persuasively for a seventh-century fixation of the Homeric texts in the light of iconographical evidence. Jonas Grethlein, in a study of Odysseus and Achilles in the *Odyssey*, hopes to show (and succeeds in doing so) 'that the relation between Odysseus and Achilles in Homeric epic is far more complex than the metapoetically charged juxtaposition of βίη versus μῆτις, which Greg Nagy's *The Best of the Achaeans* has made a central creed of Homeric scholarship' (140). I agree whole-heartedly: this painfully reductive antithesis never deserved the prominence it has gained. And, as Grethlein observes, 'the Iliadic echoes make the *Odyssey* into more than an adventure story: it becomes a multi-facetted narrative engaged with ethical issues' (138). Gregory Hutchinson, who can be relied upon for stimulating thoughts expressed with precision, elegance, and wit, begins by suggesting that scholars have laid 'too much emphasis on the production' of the Homeric poems, 'and not enough on the effect of the works on the audience or audiences of the time' (145). He goes on to examine the phenomenon of repetition in

[1] *The Winnowing Oar. New Perspectives in Homeric Studies. Studies in Honor of Antonios Rengakos*. Edited by Christos Tsagalis and Andreas Markantonatos. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2017. Pp. vi + 311. Hardback £73.99, ISBN: 978-3-11-054335-3.

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the light of cognitive studies (specifically, the concept of 'attention') and comparative literature. Oral improvisation is acknowledged as 'a conceivable possibility', but 'it may be time to turn…our primary attention…to an understanding of [the poem's] impact which best fits the text and best captures its multiplicity and power' (167).

Homer's Iliad and the Trojan War[2] is concerned with the *Iliad*'s place within a broader tradition, where 'tradition' is conceived as a dialogical process (2). The dialogue theme is beguilingly introduced on the first page by setting out lines from the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* in the style of an SMS chat. The co-authors construct dialogues in a series of chapters that juxtapose paired case studies: 'as dialogue is our subject, it is also our method' (2). The first chapter ('Navigating tradition') compares the respective 'meta-poetics' of the *Iliad* and the eighth-century Akkadian poem *Erra and Ishum*. In Chapter 2 ('Visualizing Society'), a political reading of Euthymides' late sixth-century vase-paintings is set alongside Rossetti's 1863 portrait *Helen of Troy*. Chapter 3 ('Staging Conflict') juxtaposes Euripides' *Trojan Women* and Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. In Chapter 4 ('Seeking Truths'), Herodotus and Schliemann are paired as seekers for the truth about Troy. The twelfth-century Godfrey of Viterbo's *Speculum regum*, previously unknown to me, I found ingenious and engaging: alas, its partner in Chapter 5 ('Claiming Identities') was Wolfgang Petersen's tediously crude 2004 film *Troy*. I confess that my mind wandered at this point, and my thoughts turned instead to Godfrey's entertainingly fraudulent fifteenth-century compatriot, Annius. The tenth book of Annius of Viterbo's *Antiquitates* summarizes the *de temporibus* of Archilochus (the chronographer, of course, not the poet), who distinguishes eight different Homers, the last of whom (the poet) learned to write from the Phoenicians. Though I found most of Haywood and Mac Sweeney's case studies interesting in themselves, the dialogical model did not in the end convince me: juxtaposition did not always generate meaningful interaction. Their joint conclusion worked better, though. The volume has more than its fair share of copy-editing or proofreading glitches: not for the first time, Bloomsbury falls short in its commitment to quality control.

'Much is excellent; some is stunningly good.' Such was my judgement on Peter Green's *Iliad* (*G&R* 63 [2016], 117), despite its occasional rhythmical stumbles or jarring registers. His *Odyssey*[3] has the same virtues and occasional vices. The exclamation mark in 6.147 struck me as ill-judged: and, having noticed that, I found Green's addiction to exclamation marks a cumulative irritant. For example:

> *Don't talk up death to me, illustrious Odysseus!*
> *I'd rather work as a field-hand, a hireling, for some other*
> *landless man who could just scrape a livelihood together*
> *than be lord over all the corpses who've ever perished!* (*Od.* 11.487–91)

[2] *Homer's Iliad and the Trojan War. Dialogues on Tradition*. By Jan Haywood and Naoise Mac Sweeney. Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Pp. x + 224. 5 b/w illustrations. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-3500-1268-4.

[3] *Homer. The Odyssey*. Translated by Peter Green. Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 522. 2 maps. Hardback £24, ISBN: 978-0-520-29363-2; paperback £13.99, ISBN: 978-0-520-30336-2.

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Compare the same lines, which I quoted with admiration when I reviewed Anthony Verity's version (*G&R* 65 [2018], 242):

> *Do not try to comfort me about death, splendid Odysseus.*
> *I would rather be a land-labourer, bonded to another man,*
> *one who owns no land, and with little enough to keep him*
> *alive, than to be king over all the dead who have passed away.*

Verity's rendering, though avowedly not poetic, is in this instance superior. But if you want a taste of Green's ability to produce sustained read-out-loudable poetry, try the recognition of Odysseus and Penelope (23.85–255, ignoring the eleven exclamation marks). Green is, of course, not only a linguistically skilled and rhythmically sensitive translator: he is also an erudite, versatile, and thoughtful scholar. The introduction should therefore be worth reading – and it is. But there are some oddities. The 'compelling and enjoyable narrative' (25) is severely (and uncharitably) criticized for faults in narrative coherence and plausibility. I was puzzled by the assumption that, though 'we' can accept Athene 'spiffing up' Penelope's appearance, her transformation of Odysseus 'defies credulity' (19). According to Green, 'we know, as did the original audience, what the climax will be, and, like them, grow impatient at the leisurely development of the narrative' (9). I've no idea how Green knows that the original audience grew impatient; and though I concede that many modern readers grow impatient, I object to being included among them by the coercive use of 'we'. In my experience, reading patiently is much more rewarding.

In the very remote past (*G&R* 53 [2006], 110) I criticized a translation of the *Oresteia* for its failure to respect Aeschylus' carefully explicit ideological parallel between the Furies and Athene (*Eum*. 526–7 ~ 696). Oliver Taplin's new translation of the trilogy[4] in the Norton Critical Editions series passes the test: 'Don't praise a life oppressed, / nor yet a life dispersed / in careless anarchy' and 'So I advise my citizens to venerate a way of life / that's neither anarchy nor yet oppression either.' As with Taplin's excellent versions of four Sophoclean plays (*G&R* 63 [2016], 119–20), in *Agamemnon*, *Women at the Graveside*, and *Orestes in Athens*, he has tried to produce 'a script that is good for reading aloud' (xxx): and he succeeds in the attempt. This does involve the sacrifice ('editorial pruning') of 'somewhat more than 5% of the Greek text', on grounds ranging from serious textual corruption through subject matter too esoteric for most modern readers to expressions judged to be weak, wordy, or laboured (xxxii–xxxiii). Those interventions may incur the disapproval of purists or pedants: but a script that is 'good for reading aloud' would scarcely be possible without them. Here, as a taster, are illustrations of spoken, anapaestic, and sung text:

> *As for the rest, I'm keeping quiet—*
> *a hulking ox is standing on my tongue.*
> *The house itself, if it could find a voice,*
> *would speak out all too clear.*

[4] *Aeschylus. The Oresteia*. Translated by Oliver Taplin. Edited by Oliver Taplin and Joshua Billings. Norton Critical Editions. New York, W.W. Norton, 2018. Pp. xxxv + 251. 1 map. Hardback £21.99, ISBN: 978-1-63149-466-6; paperback £8.95, ISBN: 978-0-39392-328-5.

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I'm saying this to those who know my drift:
for those who don't. . .. it's slipped my mind. (*Ag.* 36–9)

'War!' they cry out, 'war!' and shrieking
sail like eagles high above their
emptied eyrie; range in anguish
for their children; wheel in spirals,
rowing with their feathered oar-strokes,
since they've wasted all that labour,
nest-patrolling for their hatchlings. (*Ag.* 49–54)

Unhindered by our manic gaze,
all kinds of death shall be released.
Though all about the victims claim
they have been harmed by kindred crime,
they will not find that there's redress
in answer to their anguished cries.
And though they try to stem their pain,
their remedies shall be in vain. (*Eum.* 499–507)

Supporting matter includes details of textual variants and elements 'pruned' from the text; a proposed reordering of the trial scene; five illustrative vase-paintings and a small selection of relevant ancient texts; and fourteen extracts reprinted from secondary literature, amounting in total to eighty-eight pages.

In another Norton Critical Edition, Sheila Murnaghan translates Euripides' *Medea*.[5] The supporting material comprises nine pages of extracts from ancient texts and three reprinted critical essays: Pat Easterling on the infanticide, Helene Foley on the divided self (omitting several sections), and Edith Hall's 'Divine and human in Euripides' *Medea*'. The translation cannot match Taplin for creativity and flair – but that's a very demanding benchmark, and Murnaghan does achieve an impressive clarity and weight. For example:

Friends! My plan is clear: as fast as I can
I will kill my sons and leave this land.
I cannot hold back and let those boys
be slaughtered by someone who loves them less.
They have to die, so it is only right
that I who gave them life should kill them. (1236–41)

There were, however, things in the introduction that surprised me. Medea, it is claimed, responds to 'unremarkable acts of blindness and selfishness on the part of others' (ix): but are they unremarkable? Aegeus is shocked when he learns of them. Can it be true that ancient Greek men 'resented' their wives' capacity to bear children (xvii)? And the Athenian citizenship law of 451 was surely not about 'the importance of motherhood' (xvii) but about which males the Athenians were willing to recognize as fellow-citizens.

[5] *Euripides. Medea*. Translated and edited by Sheila Murnaghan. Norton Critical Edition. New York, W.W. Norton, 2018. Pp. xxiv + 102. Paperback £7.95, ISBN: 978-0-39326-545-3.

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The promised sequel[6] to Simon Hornblower's massive commentary on the *Alexandra* (*G&R* 64 [2017], 66) comes with a longer title than the commentary prefigured: the addition of 'Rome' reflects the author's conviction that the Roman war against Hannibal 'left its mark on an interesting political poem' (v). Part I, on the poet's geopolitical world, takes us on a tour of the Hellenistic kingdoms; cities and federations of Old Greece; Sicily; south Italy; Rhodes; and Campania, Latium, and Rome. In Part II, on cultural and religious contexts, Hornblower argues that the Sibylline Oracles and other apocalyptic literature show only superficial similarities to the poems (though Polybius 'provides a better if unexpected parallel', 145), but finds more to be said about the political significance of cults and myths of identity. As will be obvious even from my ridiculously brief outline, the book 'is unapologetically a work of history' (vi); and the text is dense. So you should not look to me for an informed summary and assessment of its argument. But the conclusion that the poem was composed in south Italy around 190 BCE seemed compelling, as did the argument that it has 'a good claim to be the most political, or at any rate the most interestingly political, Greek poem to have survived from the Hellenistic period' (187). Politically interesting, but (I would still maintain) poetically indigestible.

Music, Text, and Culture in Ancient Greece[7] addresses two issues: the role played by music in performed poetry, and ancient understandings of the relationship between music, poetry, and performance. The aim is 'to make connections between musicological scholarship and the issues that have traditionally concerned students of ancient literature' (2). The first part of the book ('Interpretations') is slanted towards the former, and the first chapter, John C. Franklin's 'Epicentric Tonality and the Greek Lyric Tradition', powerfully demonstrates the difficulty of the bridge-building project: I confess that I was left completely at a loss. In the second chapter, 'The Musical Setting of Ancient Greek Texts', Armand D'Angour deals more accessibly with musical effects in Homer, the papyrus fragment of a notated Euripidean lyric, and the song of Seikilos. D'Angour has been active in disseminating the results of recent advances in our understanding of ancient music by making audible reconstructions available online.[8] A book concerned with mediality ('the properties and qualities of the media in which artworks are constructed' and the 'relations between different media within a single artwork', 3) would be much more approachable if it were not itself an example of transmediality ('one medium being transposed into or reworked in another', 3). In the second part ('Theory, Reception, Contexts'), Pierre Destrée provides a careful examination of Aristotle's confusingly structured discussion of music in *Politics* 8: this, despite a regrettable attachment to Sauppe's conjecture at 1342a15, is a must-read. Andrew Barker's account of the literary sophistication of Plutarch *Quaest. conv.* 704c4–705b6, together with his concluding reflections on intermediality, was also illuminating.

[6] *Lykophron's Alexandra, Rome, and the Hellenistic World*. By Simon Hornblower. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xxv + 254. 1 map. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-0-19-872368-4.

[7] *Music, Text, and Culture in Ancient Greece*. Edited by Tom Phillips and Armand D'Angour. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 279. 6 b/w illustrations. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-0-19-879446-2.

[8] E.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc97mwbbMds> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09pl81v>, both accessed 28 November 2018.

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Apollodoriana[9] is the product of the first conference on the *Bibliotheca*: 'and, to this date, no monographic volume on Apollodorus' mythology exists either' (1). When so many edited volumes are supplied with tiresomely expansive prolegomena, bloated with generalizations and woolly abstractions, Jordi Pàmias' introduction to this volume is refreshingly lean. But the brief mentions of the individual contributions are far too brief to be genuinely helpful. Readers approaching a pioneering volume on a specialized subject need more guidance: abstracts would have made the subject matter and the issues more accessible. Most of the contributors show commendably cautious restraint in formulating their conclusions. Consider, for example, Nereida Villagra: 'The main conclusion of this article is that the comparison between texts and textual artefacts proves useful when applied to a specific detail or myth, but this allows for no generalisations' (63).

A coffee-table Diogenes of Laertius?[10] It seems an unlikely project. But there it is: large pages, spacious layout, glossy paper, 280 colour illustrations. Pamela Mensch's clear, fluent translation is supported by annotation 'aimed at the general reader rather than the specialist reader' (xv) – which, given the nature of the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, amounts to quite a lot of annotation. As the editor, James Miller, remarks: 'if…one reads the entire text straight through (as there is some evidence the author intended), a not unwelcome bewilderment descends' (x). One might assume that even a general reader who chooses to read a book on the lives of ancient philosophers might have some interest in philosophy: but the notes 'avoid commenting…on the philosophical substance of the various views that Diogenes reproduces' (xv n. 12). The stated aim of the volume is 'to convey some of the essential strangeness of what philosophy once was' (xviii). Leaving the philosophy without comment is certainly an effective way to produce a sense of strangeness, and indeed bewilderment: but not illumination. At the end of the volume, however, there are sixteen essays, averaging about 4,500 words, on the textual transmission of the *Lives*, on their reception, and even on the philosophy: serious outlines by heavyweight scholars, in much smaller print. An up-to-date translation is, whatever the format, something to be welcomed.

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Latin Literature

Nos ausi reserare… ('We dare unbolt…'): a small but weighty beginning, with the new Loeb Ennius. It's nearly eighty years since E. H. Warmington finished his four-volume *Remains of Old Latin* (1935–40), combining the fragments of Ennius, Lucilius, Accius,

[9] A*pollodoriana. Ancient Myths, New Crossroad Studies in Honour of Francesc J. Cuartero*. Edited by Jordi Pàmias. Berlin, de Gruyter, 2017. Pp. vi + 253. Hardback £99.99, ISBN: 978-3-11-054074-1.

[10] *Diogenes Laertius. The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Pamela Mensch. Edited by James Miller. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xxii + 676. 280 colour illustrations. Hardback £32.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-086217-6.

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