ones'. H. states that the aim of his book is an attempt 'to place Thucydides, prose historian of war and politics, next to Pindar, and to show that the overlap between their two worlds was considerable' (p. 37). He has certainly succeeded in fulfilling that aim.

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PINDARIC OBSCURITY

J. T. HAMILTON: *Soliciting Darkness. Pindar, Obscurity, and the Classical Tradition*. (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 47.) Pp. xii + 348, ill. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Department of Comparative Literature, 2003. Paper, £17.95 (Cased, £29.95). ISBN: 0-674-01257-7 (0-674-01222-4 hbk).

Compared with some other Greek writers, Pindar has been rather neglected by the current renaissance in reception studies in Classics. Various aspects of his reception history, especially in the early modern period, have been discussed, but especially in English-language scholarship he hasn't had the same kind of attention as Sappho, let alone drama or Homer. For this reason alone, H.'s *Soliciting Darkness* is welcome.

Over the years, Pindar has enormously fascinated a great number of poets and scholars. H.'s theme, the issue of Pindar's obscurity, goes to the core of this fascination. Throughout, H. is concerned with the different ways readers—poets, translators, scholars, film makers—have responded to the widely felt interpretative difficulties posed by Pindar's poetry, and develops a persuasive story of different ways of engaging with these difficulties. While some readers (especially classical scholars) have tried to eliminate any perceived obscurity through interpretation and work on historical context, others have found that such obscurity is inherent in Pindar's poetry and have either attacked or in fact admired him for it. H. highlights a large number of contexts in which Pindar's obscurity becomes important for his readers, whether as a source of challenge, annoyance or inspiration. On the way—and to me that is one of the most attractive features of the book—H. gives a sense of the sheer variety of Pindaric reception, ranging across various countries and genres. The heroes of the book, apart from Pindar himself, are probably Horace, Goethe, Hölderlin, and Wilamowitz, but many others get their time in the limelight. Inevitably, such variety creates as much curiosity as it satisfies. To what degree is the emphasis on Germany in the book a matter of H.'s selection, and to what degree does it reflect a special status for Pindar in German literature and scholarship? What about Pindar in painting and in music, neither of which feature prominently? Or Pindar in school and university teaching? H.'s book gives a sense of the scope for further work on Pindar's reception.

H.'s disciplines are German and comparative literature, and *Soliciting Darkness* is probably not intended as a book for classicists in the first place, but perhaps that is partly why it raises interesting methodological questions from a Classics perspective. The 'classical tradition' appears in the subtitle, and in some ways H.'s book is comparable to discussions tracing the afterlife of other ancient poets or works through the centuries. However, this is anything other than a chronological survey of Pindaric reception from the fifth century B.C. until today. Nor, though, is it an example of another well-established mode of writing reception history, detailed

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discussion of a few particular moments of engagement with classical sources and of the contexts of this engagement. Rather, H.'s book is organized, somewhat loosely, around themes, such as, for instance, Pindar as a poet, that cannot be easily assimilated to the present or Pindar's voice as a praise poet. In discussing such themes, H. ranges freely across periods, revisiting some periods and authors several times.

This approach allows H. to bring out thematic links between texts that are not usually put together, and it also allows him to introduce his own readings of Pindar at some length in the middle of the book, giving the source texts more prominence than many discussions of reception by classicists. As a result, *Soliciting Darkness* prompts questions about how we should best think about the classical tradition in general and the tradition of one classical poet in particular. Grand narratives are out of fashion, but inevitably the long survival and changing fortunes of ancient texts over many centuries remain central to reception studies. Clearly, H.'s thematic approach is one way of responding to this issue.

By contrast, what H.'s approach does not always let him do is go into full detail about historical contexts or to make full use of earlier scholarship, certainly for the ancient material. The need for selectivity is one of the main challenges in writing reception history across different centuries and cultural settings. H. has chosen one way of making selections. I have come away from the book with the sense that at the heart of his undertaking is ideas and themes, rather than history or readings of poetry (though there are plenty of those too). Perhaps at times, these choices can make the book a little vulnerable and elusive. However, H.'s focus on Pindaric obscurity over the centuries is compelling, and certainly provokes thought about how to read Pindar and how to 'do reception'.

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THE NEW SIMONIDES

D. Boedeker, D. Sider (edd.): *The New Simonides. Contexts of Praise and Desire*. Pp. xii + 312. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Cased, £48. ISBN: 0-19-513767-1.

The editors published a shorter version of this book in *Arethusa* 29:2 (1996), stemming from a conference held in Atlanta in December 1994. The present version incorporates additional contributions stemming from a conference held in Oxford in November 1997. The contribution by Peter Parsons, which figures as Chapter 2 of the present version, provides the best introduction to the subject at hand, the so-called 'New Simonides'. The centerpiece is *POxy.* 3965, originally edited by Parsons himself in 1992. In the same year, the new fragments of *POxy.* 3965, which Parsons joined with *POxy.* 2327 in his *editio princeps*, were included in the second edition of Martin West's *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*, Volume II (1992). The most important new evidence for understanding the elegiac poetry of Simonides is to be found in fr. 11 W^2; also important are 20–2 W^2. At the beginning of the book, David Sider provides a text, apparatus criticus, and translation of frr. 1–22 W^2. Following Sider is Chapter 1, 'The New Simonides: Toward a Commentary', by Ian Rutherford. This work is useful as an introduction, though the facts that it adduces overlap extensively with the facts adduced in the introduction of Parsons, which follows as Chapter 2. It would have been better for the editors to start with the introduction of

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