of élite personal bearing advocated by Cicero is implicated in the maintenance of social hierarchy (indeed, in places C. makes effective use of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*), and notes that such Ciceronian texts elide nature *natura* and culture. Yet C. himself often treats 'nature'—a term to which another notion of Bourdieu's, 'the cultural arbitrary', might readily be applied—as both self-evident and unproblematic. The final sentence of C.'s introduction is disconcerting: 'I cannot help but share with these sources a feeling that something vital in the relationship between bodies and their external environment has been, and continues to be, lost.' I for one am intrigued to know just where C. locates that moment when we—or the Romans—were at one with nature.

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LITERATE CULTURE

H. YUNIS (ed.): *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece*. Pp. x + 262. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Cased, £40, US$55. ISBN: 0-521-80930-4.

This volume is the product of two conferences held at Rice University in 2000 and 2001. The editor describes its aim as 'understanding how specific cultural practices in Greece were affected when the people engaged in those practices began to use written texts' (p. 11). A number of contributions use written texts and/or literate practices as explanatory factors in the development of Hellenic culture, treating oral practices as not merely primitive survivals, but as centrally involved in the practices of literacy themselves. Andrew Ford treats literate education as a factor in the development of 'literature' and as the basis for Aristotle's construction of formalist pleasures derived from reading texts. The gradual displacement of the full materiality and meaning of song in written texts make possible Aristotelian poetics and our own. Michael Gagarin posits the origin of law in the inscription of true, retroactive legislation before exploring the orality of the legal process as a bulwark against the rise of experts, who form barriers between the people and the law; orality insures an authoritative rôle for the *demos* in the adjudication and enforcement of the laws. Leslie Dean-Jones imagines the rise of the medical charlatan and the decline of doctors' reputations in the fourth century as by-products of medical texts among whose rhetorical aims is the attraction of students to the face-to-face, oral instruction required of a doctor. Albert Henrichs surveys the increasing use of writing in religious practice while noting that the 'performative core' of Greek religion resisted inscription. Harvey Yunis conceptualizes the interpretation of written texts as a problem of an 'absent author' and a 'critical reader' who asks 'what does he mean?' Thucydides and Plato, he claims, conduct dialogues with their 'critical readers' in different ways. Rosalind Thomas analyzes the *epideixis*, an oral exhibition variably based upon a written text with a unique set of stylistic features, as a primary mode for publication among Sophists, medical writers, and others, and as a turning point between the orality of early classical culture and the literate practices of the fourth century.

Different in argumentative form are the contributions of Charles Kahn, who pieces together a genealogy of scientific literary texts, and Geoffrey Lloyd, who compares the functions of texts in Chinese philosophy/mathematics with those in the Greek

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tradition as recapitulations of their respective socio-political contexts. David Cohen assesses the evidentiary value of documents and oral testimony in different types of court case, showing how the relative validities of oral testimony and written document vary according to case, claim, and venue. He contrasts the establishment of personal identity in citizenship and inheritance cases, which favor oral testimony, with contractual disputes in the maritime courts, where written contracts have testamentary validity. Richard Hunter closes the volume with a meditation on stylistic categories and practices from Homer to Longinus, using a reading of the songs of Lycidas and Simichidas in Theocritus' *Seventh Idyll* as a touchstone for rhetorical categories of style and as a vanishing point between classical and post-classical culture.

The editor announces that 'The phenomena considered in this book are directly represented by the evidence at hand' (p. 11). Dean-Jones's 'Literacy and the Charlatan in Ancient Greek Medicine' adduces exiguous evidence for the figure of the charlatan (the person who poses as a doctor without sufficient training) in the Hippocratic corpus and provides no basis for linking the rise of the charlatan and an alleged decline in doctors' reputations in the fourth century either to each other or to the circulation of medical texts. She claims that the Hippocratic corpus issues 'many complaints' against charlatans and lists terms for them: 'fraud' (*alazôn*) and 'non-doctor' (*ho mê iêtros*, *aniêtros*), citing three passages. The most important, *On the Sacred Disease* 2, uses *alazones* of religious imposters who first classified epilepsy as a sacred disease; it is irrelevant. Dean-Jones cites *Regimen in Acute Diseases* 2, which refers to *hoi mê iêtroi*. But these are likely to be lay people (*dêmotai*, *idiôtai*) who have heard doctors use the vocabulary of regimen and use it themselves so that 'they seem to be doctors'. They are not frauds; even if they were, they have not read texts. Dean-Jones does not cite *ho mê iêtros*, which also refers to lay people, though not to frauds, in the same treatise (p. 1). This leaves the *aniêtros* of *Precepts* 7. He is a fraud of sorts; but whether he lacks training and is a charlatan or whether he simply values luck, money, and reputation above the art is impossible to determine.

Dean-Jones cites no primary evidence for her *explanandum*, the decline of doctors' reputations in the fourth century, nor does she analyze the type of ridicule they receive, referring the reader to authorities. New stereotypes for doctors do emerge on the fourth-century and Hellenistic stages (and four lost *Iatroi*), but not because doctors are charlatans in Dean-Jones's sense. They are caricatured in ways comparable to philosophers, *rhêtores*, *hetairai*, cooks, and mercenaries. The *explanans* for doctors' images in comedy lies outside the medical texts and also explains the mockery of other *misthophoroi* and practitioners of specialist knowledge.

Another of the volume's features, according to its editor, is that 'Interpretation is conducted not at the level of concepts, but at the level of the evidence' (p. 11). In Yunis's contribution, 'Writing for Reading: Thucydides, Plato, and the Emergence of the Critical Reader', the problem lies in conceptualization. To treat complex acts of speech such as Thucydides' *History* or a Platonic dialogue as if it has an intentional, recoverable 'meaning' is misguided. Their orders of magnitude preclude treating them as propositions, definitions, or single-sentence oracles, the kinds of utterances whose truth-value the Socratic elenchus, which Yunis adopts as his interpretive model, tests.

Yunis treats literate and aural reception as absolute, conceptual contraries. He makes Gorgias' and Plato's concepts of aural reception as *ekplêxis*/*thelxis* actual states of consciousness required for the experience of poetry. Hence it is impossible to experience poetry and to inquire into the poet's meaning, for this breaks the spell. Interpretation is therefore necessarily the domain of literate reception. Yunis's term for the interpreter, the person who asks 'what does he mean?' is 'critical reader'. Such a

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figure is an entailment of the 'absent author', the writer whose absence precludes an answer to the question 'what do you mean?' The 'absent author' anticipates the 'critical reader', encoding an answer to his question in his text. In this way, the concepts 'absent author' and 'critical reader' do the work of converting Yunis's sometimes possible, sometimes plausible, but always contingent interpretations of Thucydides, into deductions from the text grounded in authorial intention.

Yunis proclaims that Thucydides 'the self-professed critical writer requires a critical reader' (p. 200). A play on 'critical', never resolved throughout the essay, enables the pronouncement. Thucydides is 'critical' of his predecessors, but the 'critical reader' asks about intentional meaning. In any case, Thucydides is present—as narrator, agent in his narrative, and author obviating the need for a critical reader in his introduction. Yunis's treatment of Thucydides' *ktêma es aei* as Plato's orphan-book, whose absent father/author is unable to defend it, is not entirely convincing. A better model would be Alkidamas' statue: an icon of historical reality as Thucydides could ascertain and write it to the best of his efforts, destined to replace the reality after the living memory fades. Thucydides declares that what he has written corresponds to particular events and to their recurrent pattern informed by human nature. Yunis defines Thucydides' utility as 'a multifaceted glimpse into the multiplicity of events'. I find this convincing; but it is not a meaning in Yunis's sense, nor determined by interpretation. It is simply what the author's words represent—*erga*, *logoi*, and *gnômai*. Thucydides constructs his authorship as a merited and unassailable authority: he is the most accurate student of the most important war. This written authority has exercised a *thelxis* upon readers as powerful as that of aural reception, inducing them to seek a hidden teaching, a profound truth that Thucydides reserves only for them, an initiated élite.

Yunis finds this teaching encoded in the speeches, claiming that Thucydides' departures from verisimilitude—anachronisms and ironies, echoes of words and ideas, arguments off the point or subversive of Athenian hegemony—many of them highly contestable—are marks of the author's voice that 'can only be directed at the reader' (p. 203). It turns out that, taken together, the speeches form a dialogue with the 'critical reader' and constitute Thucydides' 'didactic purpose' because they 'elucidate[s] the patterns of human events' (p. 203). Thucydides thus achieves his aim of concealing his teaching from the masses 'as the price of making them available to the few' (p. 212). I think that Thucydides' description of his readers as *hosoi boulêsontai skopein*, which evokes the citizen as *ho boulomenos*, militates against such kabbalism.

Even if such devices are a code to the reader, what guarantees that a reader's interpretation of them will recover Thucydides' meaning? The circularity of this enterprise is palpable: the self-proclaimed 'critical reader's' interpretations and the author's intended meaning are necessarily identical. Professional readers of Thucydides have interpreted his text as Yunis does; they compete with the rest as plausible reconstructions. Yunis treats such interpretations as the reception of Thucydides' 'meaning', something objective, intentional, and required by his text. I was relieved to learn that 'it is not the case the reader *must* consider what the author Plato means just to read critically, and certainly not in the sense that Thucydides' reader *is* required to consider what Thucydides means in order to read his text critically' (p. 210). As Yunis points out, this could mean I am 'handicapped by the limits of [my] imagination, intelligence, schooling and time' or, 'like Socrates', I 'viewed the pursuit of the absent author as a fraudulent exercise or waste of time' (p. 210).

The volume is well edited and arranged. Ford and Hunter make superb bookends. The former is direct, reading the letter's displacement of song as irremediable loss and literary criticism as a substitute for its immediate presence; the latter is allusive,

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qualifying the oral/literate dichotomy out of existence, and with it, original, immediately understandable song. In between, Henrichs, Gagarin, and Cohen are sound (though Cohen muddles Isaios 4.2–8) and complementary; each specifies crucial functions for orality in the context of literate practices. Thomas is excellent on *epideixis*, offering a new perspective on a turning-point in Hellenic culture. Lloyd's description of Euclidean proof as 'the ultimate weapon in Greek battles of persuasion' (p. 137) is a bombshell which contrasts with Thomas's notion of an epideictic style—first-person, agonistic, and demonstrative—while resonating with Yunis's 'hidden author'.

Such correspondences and echoes, however, do not unify the volume or its approaches. Yunis proposes this volume as a scaled-down, evidence-based alternative to E. A. Havelock's use of literacy as an explanation for global shifts in consciousness, culture, and social organization. But the formula—to gauge the effect of writing on cultural practices—is not powerful enough to constitute the new direction the volume promises. Ford, Gagarin, and Thomas, whose cases for the effect of writing on the reception of poetry, law, and the legal process and the publication of intellectual activity are plausible, constitute the argumentative core of the book. Their pieces are extracts and elaborations of work they have done over the years. Cohen's piece is spot-on, but synchronic. Henrichs's and Kahn's contributions seem to have been assigned to them for the conference and/or volume. Kahn labors heroically against the gradient of too little evidence to sustain a convincing argument; Henrichs against too much. Lloyd's contribution is in the *mentalités* tradition and does not treat the effects of written practices. Hunter's piece is brilliant; but it is an essay in rhetorical theory. The editor intends the volume to 'strike the reader as a seamless, integrated, multifaceted inquiry into the subject' (p. vii), but the seams are too apparent and the facets too many to have the intended effect.

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ROMAN POPULAR CULTURE

N. HORSFALL: *The Culture of the Roman Plebs*. Pp. 176. London: Duckworth, 2003. Paper, £12.99. ISBN: 0-7156-3238-8.

It can scarcely be doubted that any civilization, if true to that definition, Roman or otherwise, lacked a culture. However, the culture of the whole community is rarely of much interest to historians more concerned about constitutions, public and political life, warfare and military events. It was Moses Finley who coined the title 'The Silent Women of Rome' (in *Aspects of Antiquity* [London, 1968], pp. 124–36) largely because they themselves did not write a great deal. They were never silent, of course, simply softly spoken or seldom spoken about. It was much the same with the Roman plebs. Aristocratic writers have rarely had any interest in the populace as a whole. Working class studies are a feature of the twentieth century and later. As a whole, the Romans remain silent for us because of the chance survival of sources, and the gulf between antiquity and the present is just too vast for oral tradition or transmission to play any rôle in our understanding of these people.

This volume comprises eight short chapters ('Song and Memory', 'Rules of Evidence', 'Music Returns to Rome', 'Culture without Education, Education without School', 'Fun for All', 'To Help Pass the Time', 'Hypocrisy and Evidence: The Case of

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